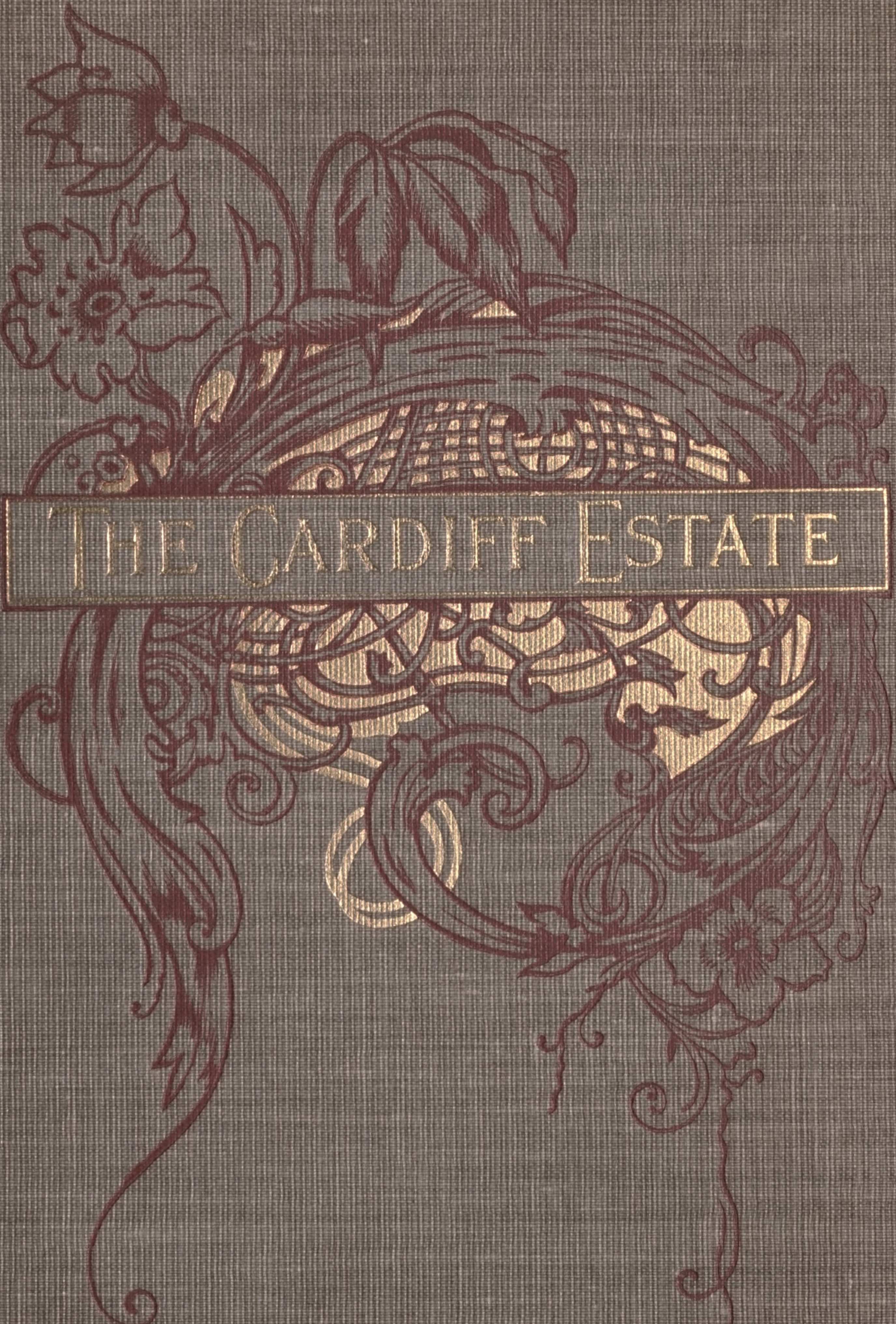

THE CARDIFF ESTATE

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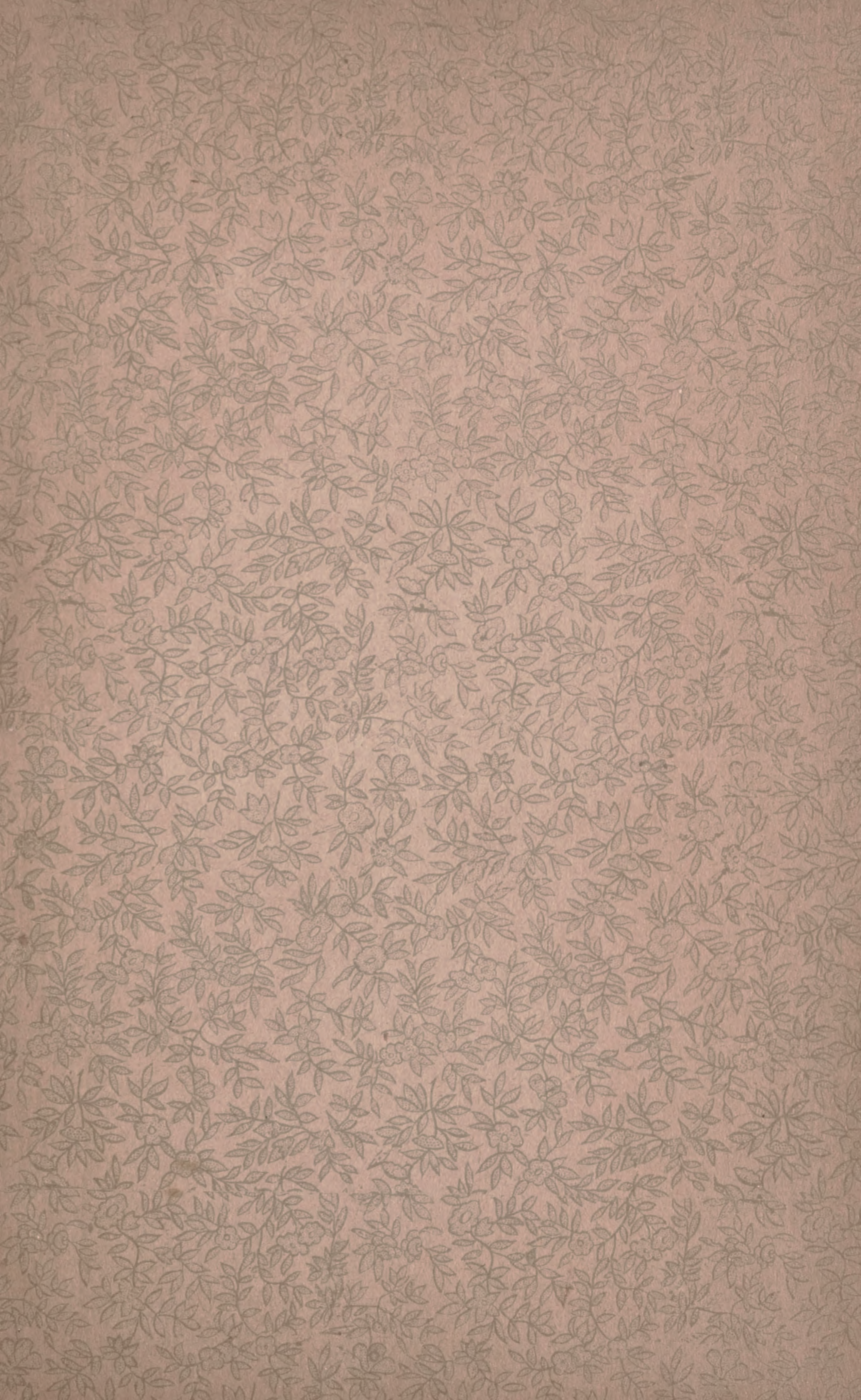

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THE
CARDIFF ESTATE.

A STORY.

BY

JULIA MacNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "ADAM'S DAUGHTERS," MR. GROSVENOR'S DAUGHTER," "A NEW SAMARITAN," "ON A SNOW-BOUND TRAIN," "THE HOUSE ON THE BLUFF," ETC., ETC.

> "The joy that you give to others is the joy that comes back to you;
> And the more you spend in blessing the poor and lonely and sad,
> The more of your heart's possessing returns to make you glad."

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THE
CARDIFF ESTATE.

CHAPTER I.

HOME?

> "Alas the slippery nature of tender youth!"
>
> "Youth holds no society with grief."

THE place was the Union Station: time, ten o'clock on a hot June morning. A group of returning tourists stood, tired, warm and dusty—ill-tempered withal — on the platform. They had unawares drawn up into two divisions. A lad and lass of fifteen, twins, richly attired, and full of a roguish joy—formed one section, and the more numerous elders of the company, eight or ten of them, the other. From these latter, surprised and irritated exclamations—"What! no carriages for us!" "Where 's my coachman? I sent especial word for him." "Only those hideous, crowded street cars!" "Ride in those hot herdics!" "I can't bear those public hacks; I know they are full of all manner of diseases!" "Where are our people!"

Then John Cardiff the lad—exultant, "You 'll have to go in the hacks, there wont one of your carriages be here." "Why not?" "I wrote." "We wrote." "I gave the orders." "But your letters were n't sent, not one of 'm, for a week! I kept the whole outfit until just as we left, last night, and mailed them all together! I 've been mail-man, and that 's how I did the business." "Not mailed our letters!" "John Cardiff!" "You young reprobate!" "And did you keep our mail too? for not one of us has had a letter since we left Bergs."

"That 's because I telegraphed back to Berg to return all letters to the city, and send none on. We had concluded to go back. Did that more than a week ago!"

"How could you!" "How did you?" "I 've a mind to prosecute you, you rascal!" "It 's an actionable offence"—this last from an editor, very excited and red in the face, who considered that all mundane affairs must have fallen into confusion since his Journal had not heard from him for a week.

"Did n't you say, Mr. Sartor, that you wished you could get where you would neither hear nor be heard from for a month? I thought I 'd let you have your wish, for a week. How do you like it?" jeered John.

"I shall communicate with your father about your conduct," retorted Mr. Sartor, flinging himself into a herdic, and ordering the driver to get him to his office as soon as possible.

Communicate with their father! The twins laughed aloud at the idea of their father paying any heed to their pranks.

"We might have known you 'd do something horrid," said Miss Larrimore, whose love-letters were among the missing; "you two are too detestable for words. I wonder any of us put up with you," and she signalled a hack.

Why were they put up with? It had long been plain to them: they had money to lavish, time to waste, a big fortune back of them; they were bright and handsome—the future comes on apace—rich boys and girls become rich young men and women. For this they had been tolerated. They understood that, also that some of their capers had been considered vastly amusing—by those that were not their victims. Now all their company had been victimized, and all were irate.

"Come right along with me," said Mrs. Fowler angrily, as she motioned for a carriage, "I made myself responsible to your father for you, and I suppose I must take you home. I am shocked to think that you should go so far as to meddle with people's mail-matter! Suppose some of us had been summoned home to a case of illness in our families, or even death? What then?"

"Pooh," said the girl, shrugging her shoulders, "what could happen in a week or ten days! How much worse off are we than when there were no telegraphs, and the mail was carried on horseback? Folks did n't hear once in two or three weeks from people then — and nothing happened. Have n't you all said dozens of times you wished you could get out of reach of dispatches, letters, invitations, bills, business? Now you have had your wish, thanks to us, and you 're angry."

"Mr. Ball especially. When we saved him from duns for a week," cried John.

"No, thanks, Mrs. Fowler, Jean and I are not coming with you. We are going to ride in a herdic; we have always wanted to, and now we 'll do it."

"Yes, let us go home," said Jean. "It do n't all seem so funny as I thought it would."

There was a cloud over her dark sensitive face: a girl of great possibilities, no doubt of marked individuality, which hitherto had not asserted itself, for she was entirely devoted to following this lad's lead, laughing when he laughed, mocking when he mocked, yielding to all his plans, not from inherent weakness, but from the very strength of her character, intense in its loving as in all things, and all her love being centered on him, its only offered object, since they were cradled together and had cooed to each other in the lap of one nurse.

"Take us to Joshua P. Cardiff's," said the lad to the herdic driver. "You know where Joshua P. Cardiff is."

"Oh yes, I know," said the man, shaking his head doubtfully, and gathering up the lines, as Jean and John established themselves in his vehicle. Away they rolled; the sun shone hotly upon the city streets, there was an odor of offal carts and of eating-houses, oppressive after the pure mountain air. The herdic bounced heavily upon the cobble-stones and across the car-tracks.

"What is wrong, Jean? What are you so dull for?"

"I don't know. I wish we had n't gone. I wish we had n't come back. I wish we had not made them all angry by our tricks with the mail. It was mean, when they had all been so kind."

"Kind? How kind, when we paid our way same as every one! Yes, and I know I paid Ball's share too; he never has any money. Say, Jean, the reason we had no papers in our car was, I gave the newsboy two dollars to keep out. I wanted the city to burst on them with a surprise, like a strange land!"

They had passed through various streets and turned many corners, and now reached the last turning to their uptown home. A large black vehicle, hitherto unknown to their experiences, was before them, moving slowly, stopping, barring their way, the great plumed car and the plumed black horses nearly blocking the street—and men drew from it a long, black broadcloth-covered coffin, heavily trimmed with silver, in studs, handles, plates, and raising it to their shoulders ascended the white marble steps. A door from which a great trailing scarf of black floated, was flung open and this ominous offering vanished within—their home! Stunned into silence and pallor, the twins clasped hands and slowly followed up to that black-scarfed entrance. Again it was opened—they stood as aliens, mute, imploring.

"Oh, Master John and Miss Jean! Have you been found at last! and your father dead since last night!" said the butler, who was all in black, with a weed on his arm, instead of resplendent in his usual livery of green and orange. Then from the hall, amid the somewhat gaudy magnificence of marbles, plants, paintings, mosaics, and draperies, came a tall woman in deep mourning, her hair lightly sprinkled with gray, love and pity shining in her eyes, and holding out a hand to each of the chilled, dazed pair, she said, "Dear children, this is a sad welcome home. I am your aunt, Prudence Cardiff."

She led them quietly up stairs to their rooms, rooms opposite each other, luxurious, where so much joyful mischief had been planned by these ungoverned two, mischief resulting in the ignominous rout of nurses, tutors, and governesses. On the bed in each room lay a suit of mourning, and as the twins closed their respective doors and faced their home-coming, they realized that they who had closed all avenues of communication with home, were the only ones whom letters, telegrams, and messengers had been vainly seeking, in whose home "something had happened."

It was an hour or two after, when the undertaker's men had gone away and left Joshua Cardiff lying in state in his satin-lined coffin, flowers heaped about it, his butler seated near in solemn watch, that Miss Prudence Cardiff led her niece and nephew to look upon their father's face. It was paler and more set than in life, but scarcely more indifferent to them, for he had always been so busy heaping up fortunes for those children, that he had had but little time to pay attention to the children themselves.

When any unusual outbreak had made it

needful that they should be called to meet him in the library, the formula had been, "Really, I am surprised that you should make me so much trouble, when I am so exceedingly busy. Do not let anything of this kind happen again."

As they now stood looking at him who since their first year had been their only parent, they were trying to hark back and weave his personality, his love, into the fabric of their lives; they would make him out as some one loved, cherished, leaned on, now to be greatly missed. It was impossible! this had not been the fashion of his fatherhood- The boy stood troubled, awed, dumb; the girl wept violently. Their aunt was between them, her arm about Jean's waist, her hand on the lad's shoulder. "He was struck with paralysis four days ago," said Miss Cardiff; "it was evidently fatal from the first. They sent for me, and have been trying to find you. We wanted you here, but he never recovered consciousness. After I came here I found on his desk in the library a letter, which he had been writing to me the night before he was seized at his office with this fatal stroke. I will show it to you. It has been a great comfort to me."

"We can't look at anything now," said John, "we want to be by ourselves; come Jean," and taking her hand, he pulled her somewhat hastily towards the library. Miss Cardiff let them go. She counted for nothing in their lives, of course, she had not seen them since the week of their mother's death.

When they left her she went back to a little morning parlor and sat down, taking a letter from her pocket and spreading it out upon her lap. That letter had been her companion and solace since her brother had drawn the last of those loud, heavy breaths, which for four days had been almost his sole sign of life. His dying had revived in her heart all that early affection, which in long and enforced absence seemed to have fallen asleep, and this letter had prevented her from being stung and torn and agonized to the extent of that loving—it was a letter so much beyond her hoping, but not beyond her daily praying. It is, however true, that so often we do not expect and hope up to the level of our most ardent prayers. In this letter God had been kinder than her fears; it gave her

> " Some landing-place, to clasp and say
> ' Farewell, we lose ourselves in light.' "

She remembered how, nearly eighteen years before, she and he had parted, their life-paths lying so opposite, so apart, that they could not tread them together. She had been willing at any time to reunite her lot with his, if she might do so without trespassing on conscience.

When her sister-in-law had died she had been summoned, for from the deadly contagion of that case of malignant scarlet-fever most of the household had fled. The twin babies escaped as by a miracle; perhaps it was the miracle of her judicious care. She had offered then to stay and rear them, as with mother love, but her brother had declined her offer. He and the children had gone away into the country, and after she had remained and given two months to seeing the house thoroughly disinfected, repainted, papered, carpetted and upholstered, she had departed almost unthanked. She had written regularly once a fortnight during all the following years. Her letters were but seldom answered; it is so hard to forgive those whom we have injured! Now at the last, as this letter told her, repentance and love toward her had suddenly awakened; and it seemed repentance had perhaps been Godward also. Who knows? It might have been. Suppose he had lived? Would he have brought forth fruits meet for repentance? What useful lives she and he might then have led! The gate to such usefulness now seemed open before her. It had been set wide by the hand of death.

Meanwhile in the library the twins had for a time faced each other; then John had burst out, "What is *she* here for? Is *she* going to stay?"

"She seems very kind," sobbed Jean.

"Kind? She's a crank—the crankiest kind of a Puritan, stiff-set in her ways as they make 'em; wants her conscience to measure up everybody's thinking. That's why she left. Father could n't stand her. Oh, I know. I overheard a thing or two that father and Mr. Thomas Dysart were saying one night when I happened to have dropped into a doze in the bay-window here. Of course, as I overheard it that way, I did n't mention it, even to you. I'm a man of honor."

"But what was there here, in our house, to hurt any one's conscience?" demanded Jean angrily. "Who could say we were not respectable people? If our father was not good enough to live with, what *did* she want?"

"Something about the way the money was made; it was not clean enough to suit her. Any money that I can get any fun out of is clean enough for me. I do n't believe in people setting up for Puritans."

"I should think money would be made dirty by the way it was used, not by the way it was gotten," said Jean. We can't help how money was made in the first place. But, John, I've always wished I had been one of the Puritans. There seems to me something grand about them, among the storms and rocks and snows holding themselves above all these little luxuries most folks think they must have or die!"

"Carriages and coachmen, for instance, like our crowd this morning. But I never set up for a Puritan, and you would n't either, Jean, in most circumstances; their rocks and snows only seem fine on a hot day."

"But I want to know more about Aunt Prudence," urged Jean; "where did she go? what did she do?"

"What 's the odds? She has come here for the funeral; she 'll go in a few days. She went off and supported herself some way---writing, teaching, somehow; and then I suppose she thought her money was clean enough to suit her ladyship. O dear! I wish this all had n't happened!" and John drove his head into a heap of downy cushions, striving to bury himself. Jean stood alone in the center of the darkened room; books and pictures lined the walls about her; the great desk was near; she looked a strong girl as she stood there, stronger than the lad twisting his slender graceful figure among the soft cushions. In some way that slight sketch of her aunt impressed and attracted her: the firm convictions, the strength for revolt, the capacity for self-support, the superiority to ease and luxury—there was in Jean the same blood that was in her Aunt Prudence, and it was telling. When she had stood just now by her father's coffin, she had looked up at her aunt and had caught a strong resemblance between her and her father in some of the finest hours of his life. They had been hours when Jean dimly apprehended that the very best in him was uppermost. Once or twice when he had been in church with her, once when he listened with her to the Oratorio of the Messiah, once when he watched with the twins through a night of critical illness; again, when an old friend, who seemed a holy man and not like the ordinary mortals of "their set," had spent a few days at their home. This remembered expression had come back to the face of her father as he lay calm in death; and as Prudence Cardiff bent over her brother, Jean had seen the stamp of kindred between them.

The butler opened the library door: "Mr. Dysart, Master John and Miss Jean!" John came out from the pillows, and Jean's statuesque attitude relaxed. Mr. Dysart put his arm about Jean, and held out his hand to John. "This is a terrible blow to you, children—sudden--sudden to us all! I expected your father to live twenty or thirty years yet." Then he sat down with the twins one on each side of him.

"What are we going to do, Mr. Dysart?" asked Jean, after the particulars of their father's death had been explained, and their own absence owing to John's foolish tricks accounted for.

"We 'll stay here, of course, and go on as usual," said John.

"Now, John, you know perfectly well we are not of age, and will need guardians and all that, like the Moores."

"I 'm your guardian," announced Mr. Dysart.

"Whew!" said John softly, and looked sideways at Mr. Dysart. He was one of his earliest remembrances, a familiar figure, and John felt that he had most distinctly respected him, always been on his best behavior before him; that Mr. Dysart's presence had been as a lens making moral affairs loom large.

"Your aunt and I are the personal guardians, but your aunt is sole trustee and manager of the entire property. It was so ordered in your grandfather's will. Your father had sole control during his life; if he died leaving minor heirs your aunt had entire control during her life. Your father was to pay your aunt a certain share of income during his administration; and she has the same charge toward you."

"Did she accept her share?" asked John sneeringly.

"It was paid into the bank in her name, and there it lies."

"I think it is the meanest, wretchedest arrangement I ever heard of," said John hotly. "I don't mean you, Mr. Dysart; you have always been a friend—and you are a man, and you know what's what. A fellow has to have a guardian, it seems, if he is not of age. But to put Jean and me into the hands of that Puritan fanatic! And we'll have to keep her in this house, I suppose!"

"She is likely to keep herself in this house, as she belongs here," said Mr. Dysart dryly, "and she is one of the noblest women that ever lived. When your mother died of a terrible contagious disease, from which every one fled, your aunt came here unasked, and risked her life for you all."

"How did my mother die, Mr. Dysart?" asked Jean, below her breath.

"She died of the most malignant form of scarlet-fever. It came to her, no doubt, from one of your father's tenement-houses; he brought it to her and escaped himself. Of course he did not know that he had been exposed to the infection."

"That was the way John and I got diphtheria, when we came near dying with it," said Jean.

"Why did he go near the horrid places?" said John. "Why did n't he send an agent, and keep where it was healthy?"

"Why did n't he make the tenements healthy? People live in them," said Jean; and here spoke the difference between these twins.

"Pooh, child!" said John, "you do n't know anything about business. Girls never do."

"Then how is Aunt Prudence going to manage all our father's business? She is only a girl grown up," said Jean.

"She 'll run it into the ground and get us all into the poorhouse," said John sulkily.

"You 'll find yourself much mistaken in her, my lad," said Mr. Dysart. "There are few like her."

"I wish there was *none* like her," growled John.

Again the twins were left alone; again John restlessly worried with the lounge-pillows; and again Jean was silent, half dazed, half thoughtful. This entrance of Death into their surroundings irritated the lad; he resented the stillness, the shadows, the crowding of solemn words and thoughts, the approach of change, the call of responsibility. To Jean the death angel came like the stately Ithuriel with his transforming spear, that dissipated all shams and evoked the true. John resolutely made up his mind to avoid that black-draped drawing-room and the still form under white flowers. Instead, all this drew Jean; she crept back there. Miss Cardiff saw her from the little morning-room where she sat alone. Her niece and nephew seemed to avoid her, and she felt reluctant to thrust herself into those two lives from which she had always been so sedulously excluded. Deserted by her natural ally and twin, robed for the first time in those clinging black weeds, there was something so forlorn and pathetic in Jean's young figure that Miss Cardiff instantly followed her.

Presently Jean lifted her head and spoke across the coffin: "I am wondering why I was not more with him; why I never thought he might be lonely, or might like me to sit with him and talk to him. John and I were always together, having our own amusement, you know, and father always seemed so busy and not to know what to say to young folks. Now it is too late. Now I have no one but John."

"And I have no one but you two!" cried Miss Cardiff impulsively. "You are all of my kin left in the world, and I am growing old. Let me be something to you. I have always cared for you, although I was not allowed to see you. Love me, Jean, for I love you." Miss Cardiff impulsively clasped the girl in her arms. Jean had known no mother; her governesses had been her natural enemies; she had envied other girls' mothers and aunts sometimes. She was ready to yield to this offered love, but felt instinctively that John, her leader and ally, had elected to be his aunt's enemy. Thus it was, after all, but half-heartedly that she held her aunt's hand and rested her cheek on her shoulder. Miss Cardiff's eyes were something like those closed eyes in the coffin, and if she were really alone in the world, it was indeed hard to refuse her friendship.

The day wore away. The three mourners sat together making a pretence of eating the six o'clock dinner. Then John ostentatiously shut himself and his sister into the library, Aunt Prudence might as well know that she was not wanted. However about eight o'clock when it was growing dusk, Aunt Prudence came in. John rose and handed her a chair; he meant to act the gentleman and the host in this house.

"I wanted to talk to you two, about your father," said Miss Prudence. "The night before he was struck with paralysis he wrote me here in the library a letter, and it was found lying sealed and directed on this table next day. I am glad that we may regard that letter as the latest expression of his feelings."

"Can't you tell us first why you have never been here, and why you and father had so little to do with each other?" demanded John coldly.

"I wrote to him frequently," said the aunt humbly.

"Letters don't count for much," said John brusquely; "he never spoke of you — did he, Jean?"

"The explanation begins far back in your grandfather's time, and you might as well have it fully," said his aunt.

"Your grandfather, my father, inherited two blocks of houses in the lower part of the city; you know the property, you have seen it."

"We know where it lies on the city map," said Jean, "but we know very little of it, for father never would allow us to go there; he was afraid of our getting some disease; he said it was pestilential."

"One of these blocks had been used for business purposes, and one for the homes of well-to-do people, when my grandfather bought them, but by the time my father inherited them the city business and comfortable homes had travelled far from them, into what had been little villages and farm lands in my grandfather's boyhood; and only the destitute, the swarms of poor foreigners, would occupy these two blocks. My father found them tenement-houses for day-laborers, and as the city still travelled fast and far from them, and the properties were yearly less respectable and more crowded, only the very poor inhabited them when your father and I were about the age of you two. Until then we had been an entirely irreligious family. We occasionally went to church, we had a Bible, as we had a dictionary; but no thought of our duty to God or to our neighbors seemed ever to enter our minds. Just then a very godly, fervent minister came to the church nearest us. He began a house-to-house visitation; he preached the gospel most powerfully, and the Spirit of God attended all his labors. Scores were converted. My mother and I were among these. Your father and grandfather were of those who cared for none of these things. It came true as is said in the gospel, we were a divided house, all our opinions and our plans of life, our convictions of duty were different. Our amusements and our business were divided; they became matters of conscience. Your grandmother and I felt that those terrible tenement-houses, the slums from which the family luxury and ease were drawn, were too terrible for endurance. The places were most unsanitary, disease rioted there, rents were exorbitant for the accomodation given; they were crowded beyond all decency; they were hotbeds of physical and moral ruin; and many of the cellars and rooms were rented for grogshops and dens of the most shameless description. Our money all came from this defiance of the good of our neighbor, and to us it seemed unclean, wages of iniquity."

"I do n't see how it was any affair of yours," said John hotly; "you could not help it; you did not run the business."

"We tried to help it; we plead and we gave, but we could neither influence my father nor help the tenants as long as the terrible conditions remained the same. Slowly my mother's heart was broken over ills she could not cure. She and I had used as little of the wages of unrighteousness as we could. I had secured the best education the city afforded, and when my mother died I left home to support myself by teaching and writing. My father died a year before you twins were born; he was a whimsical man. He left all his property undivided in the hands of your father, to manage as he saw fit, paying a certain income to me. If I survived your father the undivided property was to come to me, to run as I saw fit, with a certain proportion of income to be paid to any children your father might leave. My earnest opposition to the method in which he managed these tenement houses angered your father; he was cold and had little to do with me. Twice in time of sickness and death I came to his rescue; my work for him done, I left because I could not share in the iniquity of his business."

CHAPTER II.

SEEDS OF FIRE.

> "In rage, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire."
> "Then he speaks
> What 's in his heart."

"WELL, Aunt Prudence," said John, "it seems to me you were simply fanatical. Why was my father not as likely to be right about the business as you were?"

"Because, my nephew, there is a rule laid down for right action; it is found in the Bible, and the 'thus saith the Lord,' is final in moral matters. I had that: the 'Do as you would be done unto,' 'Thou shalt not oppress the poor,' the constant command to succor the needy, to recognize human kindness; the example of Christ, prince of the poor and the outcast, the sufferer's friend.

"But why bring that into business?" asked John.

"Because, if one is truly a Christian, it will not stay out of business; all that we are and have should be the Lord's."

"I think religion is a matter for Sunday and church and your private life, if you want it so; but not for business. I think this religion in business is as much of a humbug as Church and State," said John.

"You think so, dear boy, because you have no personal experience of religion. When God opens your eyes and changes your heart, you will feel that the real joy and blessedness of a daily business is, that in it you may be serving God and advancing the kingdom of Christ."

John shrugged his shoulders and looked into his aunt's steadfast eyes. He saw there infinite kindness and intense purpose. He inwardly rejected the kindness and resented the purpose.

"And now it seems, aunt, all is in your hands. It is your turn now; what are you going to do about it?"

"Just what I have thought should always be done: I shall run the business on Christian principles, for the good of my neighbor, the greater glory of God."

"And for our ruin," said John between his teeth.

"For your highest good. I hope you two will soon see eye to eye with me, and joyfully work with me. You were disastrously harmed by this former method of conducting our family business, when it broke your grandmother's heart, killed your grandfather with a typhus-fever contracted in his tenements, brought malignant scarlet fever to burn out the life of your lovely young mother, and you two were nearly killed with diptheria brought from the same place. Now, please God, you may sow blessings with me and reap a large reward. Your father himself had begun to see the truth. See, here is the letter he wrote me the night before he died. He speaks of you two; he commends you to my love and care; he wants me to come here and talk over affairs, and see if we cannot work together on some common ground. He says he sees that he has fed on husks, and he longs for the satisfying bread of life. O children, words cannot tell you how I thank God for that letter, which gives me hope for my brother in his death. Read it you two, again and again, and let it draw us very near together."

The twins read the letter after their aunt left them.

"I don't see much in it," said John. "Probably he was not very well—he was struck next day it seems. It was night, he may have been lonely. There is nothing for us to do about the letter. Unfortunately we shall be obliged to submit to father's wretched will, and must see Aunt Prudence at the head of the house, and running our business to destruction for the next six years, when at least we can handle our own yearly income. As we are twins, it seems by the will we both come of age when I am twenty-one. If we had any one to help us we could break the will, but Dysart is clearly on our aunt's side. Well, I 'm going to bed; maybe I can get asleep and forget all this horrible worry. Jean, tell Remeck to bring me a bottle of wine; that always makes me sleep. We 're in for a fine time hereafter, I reckon."

Jean obediently found the butler and told him to take the wine to her brother's room. Shut in her own room she read and re-read her father's letter, then slept by snatches until the morning light was asserting itself in her closely shaded chamber. She pulled back the curtains. The clock said it was six; the sunlight flooding the street declared broad day. The house was very still. Jean dressed and again felt drawn to the parlor with its silent occupant, to look at the face which that afternoon would be shut out of sight for ever.

About the time when Jean drew back her curtain, a tall rough man stopped before the crape-scarfed door of the late Joshua P. Cardiff, and eyed the bowed black-ribboned shutters and the wide scarf on the bell. He was a lowering, discouraged-looking man, whose whole appearance suggested hard times: broken shoes, mended coarse soiled clothing, a felt hat, faded, shapeless, with holes worn through it here and there; stubbly beard, eyes deeply sunken. A broad forehead and a well shaped head hinted that if he had had his fair innings in life he might have reached some good share of success. He spoke hoarsely: "So, Joseph Cardiff, death has got you at last, and all yer money could n't keep it out. It come to this fine place as well as to the slums; but it come to you fair an' nat'ral, an' nobody crowded it onto you, denyin' of justice an decency, an' treatin' you all the same as a brood of rats! Well, you 've caught it now; payin' up for them two blessed bits of babies of mine that you murdered."

Then he ascended the steps and rang the door-bell somewhat briskly. A sleepy young servant man, who had at four o'clock taken the place of the watching butler, came to the door.

"I want to see Joshua Cardiff," said the rough man.

"He 's dead."

"I know it. That 's why I want to see him. I want a last look; he ai n't buried. I 've knowed him for years: seen him weekly for his benefit. Now I 'm after seein' him for mine. You need n't be scared, I 'm not goin' to prig any of yer fine things." And so he shouldered his way past the servant and directly to the drawing-room door, which stood a little ajar behind the withdrawn portiere. The subdued splendor of the room, the heavy breath of the heaps of flowers amazed him; he pulled of his old felt hat and stood twisting it around.

"Must all ha' cost a mint o' money," he said in his low, rough voice; "my little kids did n't have any flowers, and a roughish pine box did for their little bodies; and he 's all done up in velvet and satin, an' brass an' silver!" He went closer to look upon the uncovered face. "Embalmed you, they call it, I s'pose," he said; "all mighty fine, and the money you ground out of the poor paid for it. Curse you, I say, Joshua Cardiff, curse you for ever! And if there 's a God rulin' high up above us both, I hope he hears it."

A low cry of anguish struck his ear. Was it the soul of the dead complaining, protesting? He started and looked over his shoulder. A slender girl in black, a girl pale as this dead man stood there, and their eyes met. "Do n't say it! Do n't! It is too terrible. Why do you curse him?" cried the girl.

"Because he was my enemy; because he deserves it; because my heart is burning hot like coals, for he took away from me the only good, sweet, pretty comfort I ever had in my life, my only treasure that might have made a man of me some day. He murdered my two pretty babies—ah!—ah!—they 'd no flowers over their poor little thin bodies, no fine trimming; nothing but their two little faded calico frocks, an' so into a pine box and a rattlin' wagon, and to the potter's field! *He's* going to hav' a fine buryin' an' a big white stun monument, ain't he?"

Jean Cardiff was no coward; she stepped nearer. Was this intruder mad or drunk? She did not think to call the servant who had stolen into the dining-room to refresh himself.

"Stop!" she said; "he is dead, he cannot defend himself. Why didn't you say it to him while he lived?"

"So I did, so I did! And he laughed in my face. 'I don't care what you say, my man,' says he, 'so long as you pay the rent.' There it was, the rent, the rent! He lived on it; we slum ones, we died of the dens he give us to rot in! Don't God mean his air, an' sunshine, an' clear water for all he made, both man an' beast? An' what right has any man to get rich, an' deal in the beggary, an' ignorance, an' misery of other men? To herd 'em in stalls not fit for cattle, where air is pison, an' sun can't shine, an' water is pison, an' the drains are clogged, an' gutters reek filth, an' mud an' drainage creeps up over the floors; an' summers is worse than winters, an' winters is worse ag'in than summers, an' fevers an' diphtery an' all kinds of plagues feed on us. That's what killed my pretty babies, all I had, me an' Mandy Ann.

We was too poor to go to better places; I was just out of four months hospital along of a broken hip, an' into Joshua Cardiff's den we had to go, as we wasn't allowed to lie in the street. He wouldn't fix it to make the old windows lift, nor mend the drain, nor give us a hydrant, nor nothin' for cleaners nor for health. 'If you don't like it, my man,' says he, always speakin' bitter, smooth and quiet, 'go somewhere else,' he says, 'take it or leave it.' So my two poor kids died of dipthery, an' Mandy Ann got her turn in hospital along of typhoid."

"But he's dead now," wailed Jean.

"Aye — so it seems — but let me tell you, miss, bein' dead don't end it. I've heard that wise an' rich people often claims that it does; and throws overboard the hereafter. Let 'em — mebby they can afford to; but we poor beggars can't. There has to be a world to come, where things gets righted. Can such as he go swimming in gold an' pleasure, an' tramplin' us in the mire, an' murderin' us, an' never get no pay, an' we never get no vengeance? No; 'tain't nat'ural! 'Tain't so in this world—soon or late them as breaks law gets punished by law, an' the next world, miss, what's it like, only this puffed out bigger? Now, miss, I'm done, and I'm going; you needn't ring no bells nor give no calls. I'm goin'."

"Who are you?" gasped Jean.

"I'm Sime Ridder, just a beggarly rat-catcher, a man that Joshua Cardiff an' his kind did n't give no chance in this life, nor regard more 'n rats; but I'm a man for all that, and has feelin's, though I'm a poor, mean, low-down lot;" and still twisting and tearing at his old felt hat and breathing hard, the man tramped out of the room, and Jean heard the servant dismiss him.

She had been eating of the tree of knowledge. It had been one thing to hear Aunt Jean state certain facts and assert criminality, while John pertly argued the contrary; it was quite another thing to have this man's hot words of rage and pain raining upon her soul like seeds of fire. In those few moments she had lived a mental life-time; beside all the luxurious surroundings that had always been hers, food, furniture, a lordly dwelling, she saw damp cellars, cobwebbed attics, dark, ill-odorous, where other people dwelt with rags and starvation for their heritage; beside all the amusement which she and her twin had found, she saw hollow-eyed anguish, cold fear, bitter envy; even beside this costly coffin, heaped with flowers, she saw that little bare pine box which received the dead children of the poor—small thin bodies, wrapped in patched and faded calico.

John would have answered to such a vision, "'Am I my brother's keeper?' What affair is it of mine how the poor live and die? I was born to the purple and to the gold spoon; give me my birthright and leave me to enjoy it."

The girl had a nobler soul; instinctively she felt that she was a part of the great unit-humanity; all these sufferers were her kin. She leaned over the coffin, and her soul, if not her lips, spoke to the dead. "Father, you robbed others to make me rich; perhaps you did not know what you were doing. You have called upon yourself hate, the curse of the poor, and your name is loathed. I will undo what you did. I will turn the curse into a blessing; I will teach people to love your name; I will spend my life building your monument in people's hearts; I will tell them that all this was what you had hoped to do, and left me to do for you. Do n't hear that curse the poor man spoke over you, dear; wait a while, and it will be turned into a blessing."

Then she walked slowly out of the room. She had changed: there was a strong purpose in her dark eyes; her whole figure seemed knit and forceful; the child in her had lain down in her father's coffin, and a woman had arisen and taken up the work the man had all his life rejected. It was a terrible burden she had assumed, but in the sudden strength of the moment she did not know it. For the first time she had an object in life, and it was great enough to evoke all the intensity of her character.

She met her aunt, and went to her, holding out her hands.

"Aunt Prudence, I see it all; I see all the wrong that has been done; and this morning I have heard the cry of the poor and have seen their sufferings. You mean to try to undo this evil that the Cardiffs have done; I am going to help you. I will work with you; I will not live for myself, but for these poor who suffer so terribly."

Miss Cardiff was not astonished at these words, for from the little boudoir where she had gone early to read and pray she had heard the fierce upbraiding of the rat-catcher. She had looked out and watched him as he went away, a big-boned, shambling man, with something living and stirring in the pockets of his loose coat, and as he went down the hall she had seen the sharp nose and the round, black eyes of a ferret, poked out to take observations, from each pocket flap. Jean had seen queer company that day, and the strangeness of the person, the fury of the speech, had been the means to work that arousement in the girl for which Miss Prudence had prayed. God answers some of our prayers very speedily, and for other some he keeps us long in waiting; why, we cannot tell. We will remember that Prudence Cardiff had been waiting over twenty years for this thing, and she was now past thirty-five years old.

"Jean," she said, "you are taking up a heavy charge."

"I must do it"—said Jean. "Tell me, how does one get strength enough, and wisdom enough, and love enough, to persist after the first excitement has gone off?"

"From God only, my child. The burden of other people's sorrows and wrongs and sins would be so heavy it would crush us; our patience would fail; our selfishness would call us back to ease and pleasure; our ignorance would betray us into mistakes that would discourage us; only God is sufficent for these things. We must first lay ourselves on his altar, and want to be used in his service."

"Well, then, here I am," said Jean firmly, "let him take me and use me. What else is worth living for, if once you have seen all the horror of this misery? Aunt, I cannot go back to living for my own amusement as I have, I should feel all the time as if I were dancing always over other people's starved bodies and bleeding hearts."

Then Miss Cardiff understood that God had wrought his miracle of transforming grace. Jean had had little of what people would call instruction, no course of conviction and repentance; if her soul had been illumined it had been by divinely directed flash-lights. God himself had put aside teachers, and had taken her affair in hand; and in an instant the currents of her being had been set from self, toward service in Christ's name and strength.

John slept late and was dull. Then the house became crowded with neighbors, friends, distant kin; there was no time for Jean to speak with her brother. Then the funeral; the house service; the long, slow procession to the cemetery, the carrying of the coffin into the vault, the heaping up of flowers; the fatal door was locked, and the key handed to John.

In that carriage where sat Aunt Prudence, Jean, John and Mr. Dysart, there had been tears, and for the rest silence. Jean and her aunt at least had noticed the big frame of Sime Ridder, accompanied by two or three men, evidently from the "Cardiff Blocks," grouped opposite the door of the vaults, and watching all proceedings with lowering faces and eyes of bitter hate. At last Joshua Cardiff was dead, and on the principle that a living dog is better than a dead lion, that difference between death and life seemed to give them some advantage.

"How those people do intrude themselves everywhere," said John, getting a glimpse of them. "Seem to think a funeral is a free show. Why ar'n't they kept out?" Jean read them otherwise. This was the pursuit of hate. "Have I found thee, oh mine enemy?"

At last they were at home: the door bell was untied; guests were gone; dinner had been served; the currents of life seemed drifting back into their normal channel. Twilight came. John sighed and twisted.

"I say, Jean, what are we to do? We can't go any where or do anything. I can't sound a note on my violin, or you on the piano, or it wont be good form. No one will come here, except a few old folks with long faces. If Aunt Prudence has a right to run the house and wants to do it, let her, and we will take ourselves off somewhere. Easy enough to get a chaperone, if we pay the bills. Let us go up to the Adirondacks, or the Thousand Islands, and camp until October. We 'll be out from under this shadow and there wont be so much gloom expected of us?"

"I can't, John," said Jean firmly. "I am sick of living to amuse myself. I want to do something worth while. I mean to stay and help Aunt Prudence."

"Help her! What help does she want?

Here are the butler, and housekeeper, and servants: you have never meddled with this establishment; why begin now?"

"I don't mean here. This house—why—I supposed it always ran itself some way."

"Certainly it does; anything will, money enough being supplied to keep steam up."

"It was not the home I meant, but the two blocks in the slums, those terrible disease-and-misery-full tenement houses! I am going to help Aunt Prudence better them."

"What!" shouted John with sheer amaze. "Has she talked you over, Jean?"

"No," said Jean squarely, "she did not: God did it."

John's eyes opened widely, his lower lip fell.

"Yes, I mean it. We are something to those people: people suffer; they are sick and starved, they die; women and little children and old grey-headed folks. We have no right to let it go on, and never try to help. I mean to help, I mean to live for other people. I am going to do what father would have done if he had lived longer. I shall make people love, not hate his name."

"Are you crazy, Jean? How do you know what father would have done? What odds does it make when one is dead whether people love or hate your name?"

"Why, John Cardiff!" cried Jean, girl-like, coming down at once to the *argumentum ad hominem*, "had n't you rather, a thousand times rather, be George Washington or William the Silent, than Nero, or Caligula, or Benedict Arnold, though they are all dead?"

"No," said John flatly, "it would n't make a bit of difference after I was dead, so I 'd had a good time all my life, and got all I could out of the world while I was living in it!"

The girl turned pale, and tears filled her big eyes. "Oh, John, I 'm so disappointed in you." They were trite, common-place words, no doubt, but they were the real cry of a heart-break. This Egypt whereon she had leaned, was become a broken reed that pierced her hand.

"Better drop all that folly, Jean, and come along with me in my way, for I certainly will not go yours," said John calmly, settling himself comfortably in his chair.

"And I will walk this new way I have chosen until I die," said Jean with firm resolution. "The name of Cardiff is going to mean something more than selfishness."

"Oh well, then, Jean, if you are going to play the 'Abou Ben Adhem' rôle, you and I wont agree so well as we have done, that 's all," said John, rising and pulling the bell-cord. "Remeck! bring me a bottle of wine to my room."

And taking a novel from the table John marched up stairs with an elaborate assumption of coolness.

Love for her twin brother tugged at Jean's heartstrings. She and her John had never so seriously differed, for the simple reason that, as the least selfish of the pair, Jean had always yielded to John's representations.

As Aunt Prudence came in, she saw Jean's dreary face and thought the shadow of that new-made grave was following over it in the summer twilight. "My dear," she said; a whole world of sympathy was in her tone. Jean's trouble broke forth.

"Aunt, I told John what I meant to do. I told him I had understood about the poor and miserable at last, and I meant to help, to try and make them love my father's name. And John—John is angry, and does n't care for the poor. It is because he does n't see, aunt; he says it is none of our affair, and he has always said the poor are poor because they are poor, and do n't deserve anything better. What do John and I do to deserve better? When I shut my eyes and think back a little to that man that was here this morning, I know it is all true, and that wrong has been done, and our family have helped to do it. If John had heard, he might understand it so too, but he does not; he says such selfish, cruel things. They make me sick and angry—yet, he is John."

"Yes," said Aunt Prudence quickly, "and we must have patience with John, and consider his age and his temptations, and how he has been brought up. The Bible says, 'He that careth not for his own house is worse than an infidel;' and in this higher spiritual sense, if we neglect John while we rescue others, we shall be wrong indeed. We must attract him to our work, and show him the sweetness of God's service. Where we cannot drive we may persuade. You know that St. Paul says he was all things to all men that he might save some."

No; Jean did not know it; she had never read her Bible much, but here was Aunt Prudence quoting it as authority for every action.

"The Bible tells us that charity thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked. While you lead this new life, Jean, you must only love John more and more, and try to help him in quiet, persuasive ways. Where is he now?"

"Gone to his room; and he has had a bottle of wine sent up, and one last night; and, aunt, whenever things go crooked, he has a bottle of wine, and it may harm him."

When John called for a bottle of wine the next night, Remeck, the butler, said, "There 's none in the house, Mr. John. Miss Cardiff had it all sent this morning to the General Hospital as a gift to the sick, 'from the late Joshua P. Cardiff.'"

"Well, she is carrying affairs with a high hand," said John; and the next day he went to Mr. Dysart and told him the city was intolerable, and he must have two or three hundred dollars to go for a trip.

"Where to?" asked Mr. Dysart.

"Oh, well, Quebec."

"Does Jean want to go?"

"No; Aunt Prudence has bamboozled her; she is doing the piety-charity act, or getting ready to."

"What are you going to do with yourself as a man, John?"

"I have n't thought of that, sir. I 'm most too young."

"You are in your sixteenth year, and I think most men who are eventually successful decide by that time."

"I do n't see as there is need of my being anything in particular. There will be plenty of money to live on, as I do n't intend to gamble. That is, unless Aunt Prudence makes ducks and drakes of it."

"Your aunt will be sure not to put her money into a bag with holes. There is that giveth and yet increaseth."

"I'm afraid the property will stand a poor chance, sir. My aunt has bewitched Jean, and she has the philanthropy craze."

"I'm glad of it; I like to see girls with an object, a noble object in life. They are healthier, happier, safer, longer-lived, better in themselves and more useful to the world for it. Do you wish to go through college, John?"

"No, sir: I never was fond of study."

"Business, then?"

"What business, since the family business is usurped by Aunt Prudence?"

"If she were not in question, what then?"

"Why, I'd hire an agent and take it easy, living on my rents," laughed John.

"On the whole," said Mr. Dysart, looking keenly at his hopeful ward, "I think you had better travel for a couple of months, say to Quebec, and take the Fall steamer through the Gulf of St. Lawrence to see the provisioning of the Gulf Lighthouse. You'll see a phase of life serious and intense, John, and it may set you to thinking. I shall engage a young Scotchman of my acquaintance to go with you as tutor and companion; you are too young to set off alone." John whistled.

"That is, you are very young for your age. Your life has been too easy for you. Plenty of money and nothing to do has not developed very strong moral fibre. I warned your father that you were coming up an idler, my boy."

"I have n't been to church much," said John, shrugging his shoulders and scowling, "yet enough to hear the parson say that work was a curse pronounced for man's sin."

"Yes; but given the fallen condition, the work is the most hopeful feature of our surroundings, and whoever is born into the world should feel that there is a debt due the earth for his maintenance. I cannot understand how the idler can feel truly manly. He that will not work, neither let him eat, rich or poor."

John was gone; gone to show Jean his independence and teach her the dangers of resisting his will; gone to get rid of his aunt; gone to get rid of himself; gone, taking his new tutor, Mr. Moultrie, grudgingly.

"Write to him often and lovingly, Jean, and he may come back in a more genial mind," said Miss Cardiff.

"I used to write letters on the least excuse," said Jean, "but somehow now my eyes and head feel all drawn up when I look at anything. Tell me, Aunt Prudence, what are you and I going to do. I feel as if I wanted to spend all my time *doing*."

"Yes, we can begin; but you know, Jean, further education, school, must take most of your time for two or three years. It is one of your chief duties to make use of all the self-improvement opportunities which God gives to you."

"Oh, me! I'm afraid so, and that makes me feel all drawn up too. Let us talk about the other things."

"Put off the evil and inevitable?" smiled her aunt. "Well, see here, Jean, the Scripture is, that he who builds a tower, or goes a journey, or makes a war, first sits down to count the cost. Let me tell you what we have to work on. I told you I had not felt it right to accept income gained, as I thought, unjustly. My share was paid into the bank and accumulated, and my intention had been to bestow it in the preparing of homes, buildings, where real homes were possible, for the poor. Now that the *Cardiff Rents* are in my hands, the money can be used right there. See, so much a year, so many years; compound interest. Look, Jean, I have fifty thousand dollars in hand, and I divide it—so, so, so." She jotted down in her clear, plain hand items and figures, and handed the sheet to Jean. Jean drew up her forehead and held the paper here, there, as if the work were microscopic.

Miss Cardiff put her hand under the girl's chin and looked anxiously into her eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THE MASTER CALLETH THEE.

"To come to Jesus is thy part;
His part, to give thee rest."

"WHAT is the matter, Jean? Can't you *see?*"

"Why, yes, when I look about the room or out into the street; but close things make me feel so queer."

"How queer?"

"Oh, all drawn up, and queer in my head and back of my eyes, and—sort of dizzy and sick."

"For how long?"

"I don't remember—for some time—gradually. I haven't liked to look at things much since—oh, all winter, maybe; and I had stopped reading and writing mostly, and made myself think. I liked to do other things better, you know."

"Don't look at that paper any more, dear. I will take you to the oculist early to-morrow."

"What for? This trouble will end some time."

"All the sooner probably for being skilfully dealt with. Don't worry over it. We will see what is wrong and what is needed. It will be pleasant for you to be able to read and study comfortably. You know, Jean, for this work you want to do for others you need a well-trained mind and a well-rounded education; you need judgment, discretion, hard common sense, as well as tender sympathy. All that you can learn in every line, in history, chemistry, social science, political economy, can be put to excellent account in that best of all pursuits, philanthropy. Give God not only your best, but yourself, as your very highest possible."

"Where do you get all your ideas, your knowledge of religion?" asked Jean wistfully.

"From the Bible," said her aunt promptly. "'Search the Scriptures daily' should be the Christian's orders for the day. The Bible is truly, as the Hebrew has it, 'the man of his counsel:' the promise is, that having been guided by His counsel, we shall afterwards be received into glory. 'The Lord is wonderful in counsel.' In fact, Jean, in all the events of my life, in daily business and in deep spiritual straits, I can always find direction, if I honestly apply myself to my Bible."

"I suppose that must be so," said Jean, "but I have scarcely read the Bible at all, and now when I try to read anything it distresses me so that I just drop it. This morning I read a little in that big Bible of my grandmother's; that was not quite so hard, but I did n't know where to find things."

"All that shows that we must get off to that oculist as fast as possible," said Aunt Prudence quickly. "We will devote our morning to that affair."

"But you ought to be going down to the Rents, and seeing what is needed there," said Jean nervously.

"Everything is needed there, we can take that for granted," said Miss Cardiff; "but my duty is first to do the thing that is nearest at hand. 'Doe the nyxt thynge,' says the old Saxon proverb, and the eyes of my niece are the matter of first importance at present. You are my nearest charge."

The careful inspection of her eyes and the many questions of the oculist made Jean increasingly nervous. "It is hard, my child, but it must be borne," said the oculist. "Tell me, have you had a heavy fall?"

"Oh, no," said Jean hastily.

"Well, now you must go to your family physician, Dr. Imley, is he not? Take this letter along, and let us see what he says to you." Aunt Prudence had gathered increasing gravity and anxiety from the grave face of the famous oculist, and neither she nor Jean said much until they entered Dr. Imley's private office.

"Let us have a good look at you, my little girl," said the old family doctor; "bless me, how you young folks do grow! Well, well, does that pressure hurt you? No? That's good. Have you had a fall lately?"

"No, of course not," said Jean carelessly.

"No? Where is John? Let me see you read that page. Don't spoil your beauty by drawing up your face in that way! So you have not taken a big fall, let us say flat on your back; you and John were always up to some mischief. Think now, no fall?"

"What did I tell you?" said Jean crossly.

"I want to know exactly how her eyes must be managed," said Aunt Prudence; "Jean is growing up fast, and in September she should begin school."

"Quite impossible," said Dr. Imley, returning to the letter Jean had brought. "Jean must not look at a book, nor write a page, nor sew a stitch for a year. You don't mind giving up embroidery, Jean, eh?"

"I hate all fancy work," said Jean; "but I did love to read, as long as it didn't bother me so."

"Then as her eyes must be spared in every way, I suppose it would be well to get a governess who can carry on her education by reading to her and instructing her verbally—an accomplished woman who could talk and explain well."

"My dear lady, you mistake the trouble; it is more of the head than of the eyes—spinal and cerebral irritation from some undiscovered cause. Though we do not know the cause, we see the effect; clearly enough Jean's education must be stopped—if ever it was really begun," and the doctor smiled at Jean, whom he had known all her life.

"What *can* I do!" cried Jean. "I cannot sleep all the time. It is very hard to sleep sometimes, doctor; I stay awake so! And you know I cannot sit with my hands in my lap, I'm not made that way."

"No indeed, you are not made that way, and we don't want you to try that way either," said the old doctor; "we want you to interest yourself, amuse yourself; the less you think about yourself the better, and the more you think about something interesting the better. Miss Cardiff, you were always a woman of resources, cannot you find Jean something to do that will keep her cheery, active, occupied, drawn out from herself?"

"I am going to take up the affair of the Cardiff Rents and their population," said Miss Cardiff. "You know, doctor, the old story, and what I always wished should be done; now there is set before me an open door, and no man shall shut it."

The doctor was an elder of the church which Miss Prudence and her mother had joined in that long past revival; he knew the olden "case of conscience" in the Cardiff household. His face brightened. "You 'll have a splendid opportunity for work there, Miss Prudence, to make homes out of dens, and Christians out of reprobates. Can't you interest Jean in that?"

"She is interested; she wants to work right along with me," said Miss Cardiff; "but it seemed the first duty to carry on her education."

"Yes; but you see there stands an angel in the way—a disguised angel, one of God's sending for all that. This will be an education in itself to Jean, and believe me, Miss Prudence, there is nothing so good for body and mind as a little getting out of ourselves and living in the lives of others. In this fashion some of God's giants have been reared."

After they left the doctor's office Jean leaned back in the carriage for a while, smiling a little at the notion of ever becoming one of the "giants" in any fashion. Then suddenly, "Why aunt, if I cannot use my eyes at all for anything, how can I write to John, and what will John think?"

"I 'll write for you. I will begin to-day."

"But what are you looking so grave about?" Do those doctors think I am going blind?" There was a tremor in the girl's voice.

"God forbid!" cried Miss Cardiff hastily; "they cannot quite understand the present state of your eyes, and some other symptoms puzzle them; but they feel sure that time, rest, new interests and proper treatment, quiet and early hours chiefly, will restore you perfectly."

"The world was much better off when Christ was living in it," said Jean dreamily. "I think I 've heard how sick or blind people went to him and he cured them at once fully. Was n't there something like that? I wish he were back again living among men."

"We will bring him back for some part of this city, I hope, in the persons of two of his people following in his steps, and doing as they would be done by," said Miss Cardiff.

"Where are we going, aunt? I never saw this part of the city before," cried Jean looking out of the carriage window.

"To the Cardiff Rents to begin our work. Dr. Imley said he thought there would be no danger of any infection for you; we will be careful. Louis, when you are near the Rents I want you to go slowly; I have some inquiries to make."

Louis the coachman seemed to think the suggestion superfluous; he could not possibly drive rapidly in these narrow encumbered streets—ash-barrels, garbage-boxes, upturned truck-carts, broken furniture, forlorn heaps marking a recent ejectment, little groups of squalid ragged women, venders of small wares sitting huddled on curbstones, squads of dirty, tattered, half-naked children, flanked by the inevitable little lean girls twisted side-wise carrying babies. Doorsteps broken, windows shattered, doors and shutters hanging by one hinge, or gone entirely, rough calls and cries, strong odors, these were new assailants of Jean's dainty senses.

Jean was one of those girls who naturally love children; babies and "little toddling wee ones" had been her delight among the families of her friends. She had been popular with them, but they had been like herself the offspring of luxury, exquisitely tended, pampered, waited upon. These other children moved her heart.

"Oh, aunt! What children! How many of them, and how horribly wretched! Just as that rat-man said, 'lean bodies in ragged calico.' Look at that one with his head tied up in such a dirty rag! See those two cripples, and there 's a hunchback, and there 's a little girl with such sore eyes she can scarcely see. Oh, I pity her!

Do notice that fat, curly, dirty, handsome child playing right in the mud of that gutter! Wont it make him sick? Can't something be done for the children? All my money shall go for them, poor little things! Aunt, what money will I have to spend? I have always gone to my father for what I wanted."

"You will have an income much beyond your needs, Jean, plenty to do good with. Louis, stop at that corner below the Rents. I think I see a coffee-stand there, stop by that."

As the carriage drew up by the curb, Jean impulsively flung open the door and sprang out, her pocket book in her hand; here was misery, and to give, to give aimlessly, blindly, was her first thought. An attenuated child-mother carrying a baby stood nearest, and a two-dollar bill thrust into her dirty hand caused her to scurry off as fast as possible lest the extraordinary gift should be recalled.

"Gimme one!" bawled a boy, and a silver quarter was received as a highwayman's booty. Dimes, nickles, coppers, half dollars, and a dollar bill to a cripple followed; then the coffee-stall man perceived what was going on and interfered. "Lady, lady, what are you doing? If you want to help those kids you'll not shower money on them in that fashion, it will be sure to get them into trouble. Their parents will hear of it and beat the children for not bringing it to them; and if they do give it to them it will be spent for whiskey, and then they will beat the children along of drunkenness! Oh, you are doing harm enough, dealing out money here. Every one of those children is hungry; better bring them to my stall and give them all a good meal. That would be charity judiciously bestowed." Thus the coffee-stall man spoke two words for himself and one for the children, while Jean gazed astonished at the new light let in on charity as a profession, but not as her aunt, astonished at the style of the man's conversation.

"What ought I to do?" said Jean, regarding three dollars in the depths of her purse, the remaining seven having been distributed.

"Just let me call 'em for you, miss. I know the lot of them. Come back, Amy. The lady wont take your money away. It is safe to let Amy have money, her mother is decent. How much are you willing to lay out on breakfasts, Miss? Or call it dinners, as it is eleven o'clock."

Jean held out three dollars. "Whew! they 'll think an angel has come down. What is it? Yes, I remember how it reads: 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.' Three dollars will feed fifteen real full. I 'll make it twenty. I like to have a hand in charity myself. The sick ones and cripples, the poorest, and the baby-tenders; you observe, miss, I know how to pick them out, being as you may say 'to the manner born,' not absolutely, but twenty years' enduring of the manner makes me, as may be believed, almost native. Amy, Sandy, Jim, you Totty twins, come and take seats at my stall; the lady is asking you to breakfast. Pete, get out, you 're well fed; the grog sellers' families never lack. Tom, I did n't call you, you 're big enough to work, but your 're too lazy; here you little shaves, let me lift you up," and thus the coffee-stall man sorted out his crowd, while Jean, a pale patrician in her black garb, looked wonderingly on. Louis sat uneasy and contemptuous on his box, and Aunt Prudence silently watched her niece's initiation into the ways of philanthropy.

The twenty guests were crowded about the counter, and Jean marvelled at the eager joy on the little faces; marvelled at seeing food, simple, common food a cause for such joy; marvelled that anyone could drink from such tin cups, eat from such tin plates, with such dreadful rusty dark knives and forks; marvelled that such queerly smelling coffee, such blue milk were drinkable; that such bread and cold meat, and hard-boiled eggs and dingy dough-nuts were eatable.

The coffee-stall keeper and his assistant served the crowd with celerity, and as the eager eating and drinking went on, the man nodded at Jean again and again, saying cheerily, "Oh, you 're getting the worth of your money this time. Do n't they enjoy it! Well, I wont stint them; here 's a mug of milk for your baby, Amy; here, twins, you may have all the bread you want. More coffee, Totty? More doughnuts, Sandy? Here you go, eat heartily, the lady pays—a good meal is as pleasant as a good conscience, the poet says, if I 'm not mistaken."

Finally the board was cleared, the children for once were satisfied, and scattered to report the wonders which had befallen them. Jean stepped back into the carriage, her face alight with pleasure.

Miss Prudence beckoned the stall-keeper. "May I ask your name?"

"Rufus Hapgood, Esquire—now fallen to this low estate, but once a scholar and a gentleman, 'Oh thou invisible spirit of wine,' that explains it."

"Mr. Hapgood, can you give me any information about the Cardiff Rents?"

"Madame, nothing good enough for a lady's hearing. I should be sorry to have those Rents come between the wind and your nobility."

"They are bad then?"

"Bad? Madame, the worst in town. They are not even within the poor limits of the law; the owner being very rich and the tenants very poor, why the weakest goes to the wall. Bad, madame, I transgress a rule in speaking so, for Mr. Cardiff is dead, and *de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"

"Are the Rents full."

"Nearly so, of the poorest and most hopeless. I have few patrons from the Rents, except Sime Ridder, who is an humble friend of mine, and a man of parts—though unfortunate; also Peter Tess."

"The Rents are a large property; are there any houses in this neighborhood empty?"

"There 's the Gridley property; was used for storage until folks dare n't store down here; and as old Mr. Gridley could not fix it up, or would not, why it has stood closed for these nine months."

"Would it hold as many as the Rents?"

"No; about one-fourth as many."

"Is there any room or place of gathering about here that would hold a good many people?"

Rufus Hapgood shook his head.

"The fact is," said the lady, "that I have come down here to see what is the real condition of the Cardiff Rents."

"Madame, take it on my affidavit, a pesthouse and a lair of misery—a slum in every sense of the word. I know some ladies have a curiosity about these things; but, madame, do n't look closer at Cardiff Rents.

> " 'Famine is in its cheeks,
> Need and oppression stareth in its eyes,
> Contempt and beggary hang upon its back.'

I am only a coffee-stall keeper now, but my soul is above the level of my surroundings, and I study my Shakspeare."

"The question is not of curiosity, but of duty. I am Miss Cardiff, the young lady is also Miss Cardiff, and we are come down here to see what can be done, what ought to be done, to make homes of the Rents."

"Madame, what ought and what can, do not go together here. The wrong is beyond any righting."

"The ought and the can *must* be yoked, and the wrong *shall* be righted."

"The only way to convince you will be to go and see, madame; this reminds me of the story in a Book that I read less than Shakspeare. The Lord said of Sodom, 'I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know.' The Lord went down and found it was all bad, that only a rain of fire from heaven could right affairs by burning all up. It will be so with the Rents, madame. I 've often thought it would be a good plan for the lightning to strike it."

"This is not the age of fire, but of gospel charity," said Miss Cardiff, "with Christ some good thing came into the world, even for Cardiff Rents."

"It has been long reaching its destination," said Rufus Hapgood below his breath. As he had talked to Miss Prudence, the coachman, out of sight of the ladies, had forgotten his decorum, had turned and scrutinized Hapgood keenly. Hapgood had noticed it, returned the scrutiny, and his face had flushed a little, but he put on a jaunty air, and as the carriage prepared to move on he said lightly and with an upward fling of his head, "Oh, Louis, is that you?" and turned away. Then looking after the carriage he said, "Well! lightning is going to strike Cardiff Rents, after all!"

The arrival of a handsome carriage and pair, with a coachman in livery, before a door in the Cardiff Rents, caused greater sensation than affairs so common there as a stabbing affray, an arrest, or a suicide. From doors and windows leaned towzled, bandaged heads, scrawny brown necks, faces red and swollen from drink, pinched and bleached by foul air and famine; gaunt, hopeless, hollow-eyed misery and despair.

"There are fifty families in this house, and forty in the other, and thirty-two in the one in the rear of these, besides lodgers," said Miss Cardiff; "it is our duty to see the real facts in this case. Dare you try it with me, Jean?" for Jean had turned a little pale already at what she saw.

"Yes, I dare," said the girl firmly: perhaps her courage was re-inforced by the appearance of the usually absent policeman, whom the sight of a carriage had summoned to duty. Then Louis opened the carriage door, Miss Prudence and Jean crossed the nearest threshold of Cardiff Rents and plunged into the bitter sea.

The day was hot, and along the one fire-escape that did duty for two great houses, women sat holding puny, sick babies, to try and catch a breath of air. On the floors of some of the rooms lay men and women, drunk and asleep. Two great rooms on the first floor were those deepest depths, lodging-rooms, along the walls of which stood beds without any pretence of covers, ropes holding ragged, squalid clothing; one broken stove, one bench, and one table doing duty for five families, men, women, and children. Ash barrels full of refuse stood on the landings, vermin scuttled about the broken stairs, three windowless attics were let to lads who lived as street gamins, by what they could pick up of work or stealing; the drains overflowed into the basements, where the floors were nearly rotted away, yet which were rented to human beings; pestilential oders reeked through the whole building. An old, neglected woman lay, apparently dying, in one room, and a wan mother had in her skinny arms a pair of twins who were sucking bottles filled only with impure water.

Miss Cardiff and Jean fairly staggered back to the street: they were giddy and sick with the atmosphere which their fellow-citizens breathed day and night! Miss Prudence told Jean to sit in the carriage while she herself went away for a few moments. She then made haste to the nearest street where she could find a dispensary, and telephoned for a hospital ambulance to come and remove the sick woman; then calling a cab she returned to the place where Jean waited, and going to the mother with the twins she said, "If you will come with me in this cab, I will take you where you and the babies will be well fed and clothed and made comfortable."

"What for?" said the woman drearily. She was young, but hopeless.

"Because I want to help you, and I love little babies, and cannot bear to see them suffer. Come, you will be glad when you find how nice a place it is.'

"Well," said the woman listlessly: she had nothing to leave, no one to bid good-by; nothing could be worse than this that she was suffering. She did not stipulate for return. What was there to woo to a return?

Miss Cardiff had long been a contributor to a "Home for Women and Children," a quiet little refuge for those who were worsted in life; she knew her name would open its doors and secure its cares for this wretched mother and her twins. At the first decent dairy fresh bottles of milk were secured for the ravenous babes, who fed on sterilized milk from clean bottles for the first time in their lives.

Meantime Louis had driven home with Jean. As Jean left the carriage she said, "Louis, did you know that coffee-stall man?"

"Yes, Miss Jean; I was coachman for his uncle when that one was a young man at college. I mind he went wild and was expelled."

"What did you do with that poor woman?" Jean asked her aunt, as soon as she had returned home.

"I waited until she and her babes were well washed, combed, clothed, fed, and put to bed. I dare say it was the first comfort any of the three had ever known. Then as there were three vacancies at the Home, and two at their Sea-

Side Cottage, I sent a nurse down to the Rents to find five children to fill them, and so came home."

"It seems a good deal—and yet it is so little, aunt," compared with that terrible place! What are you going to do? What can you do?"

"I shall secure the proper kind of man as my agent to help me; I shall lease those empty houses, and have them whitewashed inside, and disinfected. Then I shall get all the Cardiff Rents people together, in the street probably, tell them that all rent dues up to date are cancelled, and that I will pay for their removal into these other better buildings on no higher rents than they have been paying. I will have it seen to that the most decent families get the most decent rooms, and I will dismiss several of the most violent and objectionable altogether. When the Rents are emptied I shall have a free field for improvements and repairs, and shall carry them on as fast and as thoroughly as possible. Meanwhile my agents and a couple of good sensible Bible Nurses whom I shall employ, will be trying to encourage the people and raise them toward the level of the renovated buildings."

"And what will that level be?"

"Door-bells and bay-windows," laughed Miss Prudence.

"What, aunt? I know you mean something under those words."

"Yes, I do. 'Door-bells' stands for those possibilities of private family life which admit of decency and modesty—forbidding four or five families in one room, or a family of all ages with boarders in two rooms. '*Bay windows*' is another word symbolically used, for possibilities of order, neatness, attractiveness, homes advancing to the line of beauty, with possibilities of refined, cheerful life—homes for humanity, not lairs and dens for beasts."

"Can it ever be done?" asked Jean.

"This is one of the cases where money—with a good intent behind it—'answereth all things;' it can be done."

That night Jean could not sleep. She was haunted by what she had heard and seen during the day. Finally she rose and went to her aunt's room.

"Aunt Prudence, are you awake? I cannot sleep; I keep thinking of what that coffee-seller said about those children, that their parents would take the money I gave them away and get drunk and abuse the poor little things, or would beat them for not giving them the money. I have done more harm than good."

"My dear Jean, you must consider that the man spoke partly in his own interest, as a stall-keeper; also he only stated what might be. None of these evil things may have happened. You acted kindly on a good impulse, and greater judgment will come to you with greater experience. One of the most necessary things to remember, my child, is, that it is not given to us to do our work and also to bear our burdens. We are commended to do the work, but to cast the burdens on One able and willing to carry them. Lay that burden of yours for the little children on One who loves the little children.

"Do you mean I can ask God to take all my troubles, and straighten out all my mistakes?"

"Exactly that."

A weak later as Jean and her aunt were at their six o'clock dinner, there was a swift rush down the hall, and in burst John. He caught his sister in his arms, pulling her from her chair.

"What is this about your eyes, girl! Something gone wrong with you, Jean? Where is that doctor? I 'm going to see him! You did have a fall, I 'll tell him of it--off Jade, up in the country, last November."

"Why, John, what are you back for!"

"For you! Could I stay away and things gone wrong with you, Jean? I came as soon as I read aunt's letter."

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY.

"He looked upon my crown and smiled;
He reached the glory of a hand
That seemed to touch it into leaf;
The voice was not the voice of grief;
The words were hard to understand."

THAT her nephew, John, evidently did not love her had not made any difference in Miss Prudence loving him. Love is a plant that groweth down before it groweth up: from God to man, from parent to child, from high to lower, from old to young. When Miss Prudence beheld John's swift return and his eager attention to his twin sister, she was greatly comforted. "He is not so hard as I thought him," she said. "Plenty of heart there."

"Why did n't you tell them what had hurt you, Jean?" cried John. "It was that tumble off the roan mare in the country last fall. You fell flat, and it knocked the breath out of you. It was all my fault; I 'm always getting you into some scrape, confound me!"

"I forgot all about that fall when they first asked me, and when I finally remembered I let it go. It could not make any difference in what was the matter knowing how it came; and I'd promised you not to tell."

"I'll tell: I'm going to your doctor's to-morrow, and I'll promise them all I have, every cent of my fortune, if they'll cure you."

"Dear boy, don't fret; they'll cure me for the sake of cure, if I'm curable, and I'm sure that I am."

For a day or two John hung solicitously about Jean, then seeing no apparent change in her eyes, he pooh-poohed the whole affair as "a scare of the doctors to get money out of rich people;" for John's money was to him ever-present and all-powerful.

"All the same," said John, "there's one good in this nonsense—you don't have to study or do anything but amuse yourself, and so we'll go in for that; whereupon he planned a constant rush of "fun," for most of which Jean seemed suddenly to have no taste. Life had revealed itself to her on its sober side of delve and toil among briars and thistles, and she had lost interest in John's dashing race after butterflies.

"Yes, indeed, John, I'll ride horseback with you every day, and we'll go rowing too now and then, if you like; but you see I have something to do—something I want to do and must do. I'm going to work with Aunt Patience among the people in Cardiff Rents."

"Led off in that humbug yet, are you! I mean, to build palaces for paupers and give 'em rent free?"

"No, John," said Aunt Prudence. "All I want is homes for human beings—homes suited to their work and to their human needs, and given to them at a fair price. If they had homes rent free they would value them less, no doubt, and in many cases the money saved out of rent would go to the grog-shop, not to the betterment of the family. I merely claim that a man has no right to condemn his brother-men to exist in a kennel, and that handling a tenement so as to make twenty-five to eighty per cent. on an investment out of the miseries of the poor, is the worst kind of usury; and usury is forbidden in the Bible."

"I 'm perfectly willing to make a thousand per cent. on an investment," said John in a lordly way. "No amount of money is too much for me. I 'd find ways enough to spend it."

"In buying coach and horses to take you toward an early grave at the rate of a mile a minute," said Mr. Moultrie.

"Tut! I 'm going to live to ninety. I do n't mean to kill myself with work, as my father and grandfather did. And I sha' n't haunt dens to contract contagious diseases, as Aunt Prudence means to do."

"No, I shall abolish the dens and the diseases," said his aunt. "John, you 've no idea how wonderfully interesting it all is; such cute children, so many to help, so easy to make folks happy on a little! Why, it is just like the most splendid story-book; like writing the story-book yourself, and bringing out the end the way you want it!"

"Oh, if you enjoy this communistic brotherhood fad, some people could n't."

John looked vexed and turned the theme.

"The trouble with you, Aunt Prudence, in your charity work is, you 'll want to bring your religion into it."

"Of course I shall. The Master I serve is so kind, his yoke so easy, that it would seem to me the very grossest selfishness not to make him known to others. Besides, I do not know of any real brotherhood among men that does not spring out of the fatherhood of God. I do not aspire to the Walking Delegate Brotherhood, that receives a big salary for telling poor men of their wrongs, but never really helps them with a single finger."

"All the same, crowding religion upon them for the sake of better lodgings than the money will fetch elsewhere is a shabby trick—paying for converts. That is the only way the church gets converts, any how. I suppose, Aunt Prudence, you are incorrigible; but I expect Jean to get sick of this notion and come back to my views of things, just as she always has. I know she'll get sick of consorting with degraded folks."

"They will not be degraded, John, when they inhabit decent homes, ruled by the spirit of Christianity. I know that Christianity and degradation are not yoked together. My Master's service is honorable."

John shrugged his shoulders as his aunt spoke.

"He is my Master too," said Jean in a low, firm tone, looking across at her brother with an expression he had never before seen in her dark eyes. A deep red spot burned in each cheek and her lips trembled. This confession had not been easy to Jean; she had never before so arrayed herself against her brother.

"'Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God,'" said Mr. Moultrie in a low tone.

John was silent; even his carping spirit felt the nobility of his sister's attitude—and even the heathen of this nineteenth century have heard of a great white throne, a day of final assize, and a cloud of immortal witnesses. The presentment is an impressive one even to those who do not believe in its reality.

To be divided from her twin was heartbreaking to Jean; she wanted still to make for much in his life, and feared lest parted from her company he might go far into evils which she only vaguely apprehended. John however was sulky and avoided his sister. He emphasized the differences between them--the theatre, dime museums, music halls—he swept far away from even the small proprieties of life.

"You know," said Jean, "I could not go to such places with you; Aunt Prudence and Mr. Dysart would not allow me."

"I go there because you abandon me," said John.

"Well, stop going there and ask me to some nice place."

"No; I do n't care for a change; you deserted me; that is your style of Christianity."

"But, John, come try my way, just for a little, dear boy."

"That is just like your religious selfishness—*your way*. No, I tell you; do *my* way or let me alone."

"*That* is not selfishness at all, I suppose," said Mr. Moultrie aside to Miss Prudence.

Jean's heart was sore enough over her brother, but her experiences and knowledge were too small to show her all the cause there was for fear. There was Mr. Moultrie, he and

Mr. Dysart would see that John did not go far astray.

Mr. Moultrie's position was a sinecure as for John, who would not study, and constantly escaped the company of his so-called tutor.

"I must earn my salary some way," said Mr. Moultrie to Miss Prudence; "let me take hold of your work. I know more of it than you imagine. My first recollections are of orphanage in a tenement-house; from that to newsboy, then rescue by a good man, education by his means. When I go with you to the Rents it is to work for my own."

"I would n't tell it," sneered John.

"Why not? I am a trophy of philanthropy, the philanthrophy inspired by Jesus Christ."

As John steadfastly withdrew himself from her and otherwise gave her the heartache, Jean found her consolation in her new duties. She went with renewed zeal to the work she had chosen.

Aunt Prudence had not taken Jean back to the Rents. "Bide a wee," she said, "until I have disinfected the houses I have rented and have moved the people to them."

Jean and her aunt had planned however a work for the girl's own. Jean had gone one morning to Rufus Hapgood's coffee-stall. "I want you to help me, Mr. Hapgood."

"Madame, you honor me immensely."

"I want you to find a tolerably decent downstairs room, or two of them, and find some one to clean the place and have it painted and papered. I want you to get men who are out of work to do the work. I've been reading a little magazine that tells how men are out of employment; so hiring them will help."

"So it will, Miss. But what are you going to do with the rooms?"

"Have a kindergarten, a kind of baby play-school; but my kindergarten is going to take in the girls like Amy that take care of babies, and they can be taught to sew. Mine is going to be a plain kind of a kindergarten and useful things will be taught. And, Mr. Hapgood, I mean to have lunch given at this kindergarten, soup and bread, mush and molasses, bread and milk, in turn, each day. Aunt Prudence told me what to have, and you can furnish it, Mr. Hapgood, if you'll be sure and have it clean—and—well, a fair price, fair to us both, you see."

"I see, and you'll be satisfied. Why, Miss, let me tell you. There's some good in me, and the case of the children here has been kind of tugging at my heart. I felt as if I'd get back some of my lost manhood if I had a work for them to do. And it seems strange to me that the Cardiff name, that has been for years a kind of vampire over this ward, is now going to stand for helping. Miss, if you could afford it to have a little room extra, with water laid on and a couple of tubs so the kids could get washed reg'lar; and if you could afford a couple of check aprons apiece for the children to keep clean in while they were at the place, why the comfort and the decency would be amazing. And you'd want a motherly body to see the rooms were kept clean and aired and warmed in winter, and the children washed and the aprons done up."

"Yes," said Jean slowly; she had just begun to consider dollars and cents. "Would it cost a great deal to get a woman like that?"

"Why there was Amy round here crying for all she was worth this morning about her mother; she and Sandy's mother are the decentest folk about here. Amy's mother's eyes have given out, so she can't do her button-holes neat, and she got the bounce—beg pardon, Miss—and this place would be the making of her, and she'd be thankful for the four dollars a week she made at the button-holing."

"Only four! that isn't much," said Jean quite elate; she had often spent four dollars a week for candy.

"Maybe it is not much to you but it's oceans to her; it is the difference between starving and living. Well, Miss, I 'll hunt up the room and the men to put it in order, and speak to Widow Lark right off."

"Mr. Moultrie will come down this evening and get the prices for the room and the doing up and the dinners and all," said Jean, "and he 'll look at the rooms."

Rufus Hapgood's eyes twinkled. He had not meant to do other than honest business in this affair, but if he had, Jean was not a girl to be cheated, she was developing the Cardiff shrewdness in money matters; developing it unconsciously; it was the inner nature coming to the surface at the call of need.

"Your aunt—and you, Miss, are beginning great things here. The Cardiff Rents people may be thankful. Things had got to the worst possible, but now there 's some hope. 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' as the other Book says."

"Yes? I do n't recall it," said, Jean, and as a crowd of children had recognized Lady Bountiful and gathered about, she turned and began distributing animal-crackers and mint-drops. Not that her attention was all absorbed in the children. She heard a shuffling heavy tread, and Hapgood said, "Hillo, Sime, how 's your missus?"

"She 'll be back from hospital to-morrow. It 's over full an' they can't keep 'em over two weeks, though 'Mandy Ann ain't no ways strong."

"How 's the little one?"

"Dreadful lean weakly little kid. It 'll go just like the other ones. I don't allow to set store by it, seeing it is bound to drop away. But 'Mandy Ann's set on the feeble little anatomy, I can see."

"They 'll both have a better chance now you 're to be moved into that clean room Miss Cardiff told me she had picked out for you. She looks for you to be a kind of janitor, off times, to keep order there, and I promised her I 'd move in too, and take a hand in helping. Queer, ain't it! them poor souls on the Rents can't believe but there 's some trick in it all, and they 're so used to cussedness they can't understand goodness."

"Yes, they stick to yon vile dens like rats to their holes," said Sime Ridder; "we 'll just have to argify to budge 'em. But I fear it isn't the clean room will save 'Mandy and the little one. Says the nurse up at the Maternity to me, Sunday, 'Can't you send her out to the country for a couple or three months, my man? She and the little one would pick up rarely! The country! Land sakes! Who 'd take 'em, and where 'd they go, and where 's the money? I can't seem to get ahead. Miss Cardiff's been giving me work at those houses she 's fixed to move the folks into, and I 've bought a bed, and chairs, and a little stove, and some other things, so poor 'Mandy Ann and the little one can die decent. I don't look for 'em to live long."

Jean dropped her empty paper bags and turned.

" Have you a new little baby, Mr. Ridder? I am glad of that, you will be very happy to see it thrive."

"I don't look to," said Sime.

" And your wife is at the Maternity Hospital, and needs to go into the country?"

" Yes, but she can't go, poor girl, so I 'm going out to fetch her home to-morrow."

" At what time?" asked Jean eagerly.

" Ten, sharp.'

" I 'll be there with the carriage, and if you both will like it I 'll take her and the baby out to our farm, six miles in the country. It 's a little dairy farm we bought, so we could have plenty of butter and cream and so on, and the woman there is so nice—she will be as good as can be to your wife and baby and they can stay—oh, as long as they want, until October. You can go out and see them, you know. I don't want you to lose any more little children, Mr. Ridder."

Then taking a bill from her purse, she held it out, saying, "It is my present to the new baby, Mr. Ridder, if you 'll take it, and go buy your wife and the baby some clothes so they can go comfortably."

Sime took the bill awkwardly, he recalled his one previous interview with Jean. "Mebby--I can do something for you, Miss, someday. If there 's any rats—" he was all confused. Jean laughed.

"Oh, I expect you to do a great deal for me someday. I 'll be at the hospital at ten exactly."

Jean felt very happy as she drove away from the coffee-stall. What a delightful experience it would be to poor 'Mandy Ann, to be rested, fed and cared for in the country! This new baby would comfort its lonely parents for the little ones that had been lost. This rescue of Sime Ridder's child seemed so exactly the work for her to do—her father's money, her father's daughter, would come to the rescue where her father had done so sore a wrong; this was surely the path of earthly expiation of her father's errors that she had chosen to tread. Yet she softened in her thoughts of her father's course; truly he had not understood what he was doing. What was it Aunt Prudence had read to her that morning, the very words of Christ: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

That prayer must have clasped her father in the wideness of its mercy.

Thinking of the Ridder baby turned Jean's mind toward the mother and twins taken to the "Woman's Home of Rest," and she drove there.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Finch and her babies," said the neat little damsel at the door; they were in the nursery, she could go right up there.

What had a quiet comfortable month wrought! Here was a young woman, well washed and brushed, wearing a clean lilac calico; on her lap lay a tidy baby in a dotted calico gown, while a baby to match lay on a folded quilt at her feet. Each baby was pulling at a full bottle, and already the baby skins had lost some of their dry, pasty appearence, eyes were brighter and less sunken, the skin less drawn over the long face.

"Why!" Is this you?" cried Jean cheerfully.

"It is the young lady," said Mrs. Finch, rising. "I do n't wonder you 're amazed to see us, Miss. If it had n't been for the lady, those babies would be up in the potter's field; and for me—maybe I 'd been in the river, I was that hopeless."

"But how you are improved!"

"Yes, it is peace and sleep, and wholesome food, and soap and water, and pure air, did it," said the nurse.

"We're near the Park," said Mrs. Finch, "and there's a baby buggy, and I wheel 'em out every day. Yesterday, miss, I took some bottles of milk and a paper of sandwiches—meat and biscuit they were for me—and I went up to the Park with the babies and stopped all day. Oh, miss, it was heavenly; I never had such a beautiful day before!"

Jean's brown eyes grew round with wonderment. A pair of babies in a willow wagon, sandwiches, milk bottles, all day in the Park—this had made a day of unequalled happiness, a heavenly time! What was this poor woman made of? In what terrible arid places had her lot hitherto been cast?

"Tell me all about how you have got on," said Jean.

"Why, my lady, that first day you know, as soon as we were all well scrubbed and put into clean night-gowns and well filled with food, we went right to bed and slept seventeen hours without ever waking up. Didn't we, nurse? Only nurse, she put fresh bottles to the babies' mouths once in five hours, she said, so they wouldn't die of weakness. Then after being awake for a few hours we slept ten more. It was the first time, miss, ary a one of us had ever in our lives slept clean and soft and not plumb scared through and through. Since then, miss, seems we 've slept and ate most of the time, and nurse has been teaching me to sew better, and I made the frocks the babies wear. It is lovely, but it can't last for ever, Miss, and what will become of us when we 're sent from here? I haven't so much as a blanket. All was took for rent of the corner I had in Miss Quiggs' room. For a week 'fore the lady had mercy on me, me an' the babies had jest laid in corners on the stairs, or hall floor, and them poor weakly babies tugging at me for food and me without a drop for their blessed little mouths. Oh, after all this, seems like I couldn't abear that again."

"Don't fret," said the nurse soothingly. "Haven't I told you that the dear Lord had raised you up a friend to send you here, and he would open some way for you to live decent and take care of the babies? Why, see how well off you 're going to be; your man 's sentenced for eighteen years, you say; and if ever he does get back these boys will be big enough to do for you and defend you and themselves. Surely now you 've a chance for life."

Jean listened, her brown eyes rounder than ever in her amaze. Like other girls of her age she had had her views and dreams of married life, and she had taken it for granted that the husband's long years of sentence were the bitterest drop in Mrs. Finch's cup. Now it was spoken of as a grand deliverance, the chief element of safety; here was a new and singular view of matrimonial happiness.

"Don't worry about by-and-by," said Jean gently; "my aunt and I will try and help you to take care of yourself. I think to-day a ride for two hours in the Park will be nice for you. You get ready and come down to the door with me, and you shall go in my phaeton for an outing and I will go home by myself."

Jean committed Mrs. Finch and her twins to the care of a much be-buttoned and not wholly well-pleased youth, and then returned to the nursery. She was amusing herself with two or three small children who were playing on the floor when a pleasing young woman entered.

"Oh, Miss Lacy," said the nurse, "who'd think of seeing you out of the shop at this time of day?"

"So much the worse for me," said Miss Lacy; "the shop is closed. Miss Bell has been paralyzed and there is no one to take her place. She has money enough to live on and meant to retire soon. It is hard on us girls, just here in the slack season, and no chance before late September to find openings, if we do then. I can't afford to stay idle that long. I 've walked the streets for a week looking for work, and I came to see if you 'd ask the lady managers when they meet if any of them have work for me. I 'll do plain sewing or anything to get wages. You see I paid out about all my savings to that doctor that thought he could straighten Lois' back, and he never helped her one bit. The Johnsons are as kind as can be to us, but they can't board us for nothing; they are real hard pressed themselves."

"What a pity that you have not enough money laid up to let you enjoy a little rest and take Lois to the country."

"Oh, yes, that of course; but it 's outside of the question. I shall be thankful enough to win bread, I can tell you. I did take Lois to a little woods just at the end of the street-car line, and we picnicked there one day, and had one day in the Park, but you see I must look up work. Do n't forget me, nurse—plain sewing, children's dresses, plain house dresses. I 'm called a good hand."

"You are that—I 'll remember."

"Perhaps," said Jean drawing near, "I may know of something. We always seem to have so much sewing, and if you would n't mind doing dozens of children's aprons—?"

"I would n't mind any kind of sewing that would give a living for me and Lois, my little cripple sister."

"I 'd have to speak to Aunt Prudence. I do n't seem to know much about these things myself. Shall I bring word to the nurse to-morrow? or will you come to my home at nine? Here 's my card."

"I 'll come."

"Well, and take Lois out in the country again to-day, for I know aunt will have a deal of work for you."

"Now, you see," said the nurse, "how the dear Lord sends one of his children to pick up another."

Jean was thinking of this as she walked slowly along on the shady side of the street toward the car line going nearest to her home. It seemed so wonderful, so beautiful to be doing errands for God.

"Why, Jean, dear child, way up here by yourself?"—a lady in deep morning stopped her, and as she threw back her heavy veil Jean recognized Mrs. Carl Jennings. "Dear child, I have not seen you since your father died. You are in mourning as well as I. I meant to go to you, but I cannot find courage to go anywhere."

"And I have not seen you since the dear little baby died last spring, Mrs. Jennings," said

Jean softly. "I wish I could say a word to comfort you, you look so sad."

"I am sad. And you too, Jean, and I heard some news about your eyes. Are they very bad?"

"I don't know; we think I shall be all right in two or three years, if we do right with them, and if I don't worry or think about myself; and Aunt Prudence has found me something to do with her, that is pleasant and makes me happy, so I forget myself."

"Your Aunt Prudence! I used to know her when we were girls. She was so bright and strong and—odd."

"She is yet, if instead of odd you say good and wise. Mrs. Jennings, Aunt Prudence has helped me so! Wont you come home with me now and see her? I am sure you will find that she can comfort you too."

"I would like to see Prudence," said Mrs. Jennings.

"Come, then, right away. She will be glad, for she seems never to forget anyone. When she tells you all about the work we are doing, perhaps you will help us in it."

"What work is it?" asked Mrs. Jennings, regarding with interest the girl's face brilliantly lit with her enthusiasm.

"For the poor people in the Rents, especially for the homes, the women and the little children. We are working to make up, if we can, for what has been hard and wrong there. I want to use my father's name and money so that he will be loved now that he is dead, and that he will be remembered only for the good that was done by his property. Mrs. Jennings, there are so very many poor, sick, starved, desolate little babies. Would it not be lovely to do things for them and have dozens of little children growing up well and strong, and happy, for the sake of the dear baby that died?"

Fancy simply painted for Mrs. Jennings a picture far below the actual facts, of wan, wailing, wretched babies, neglected in their agonies, and memory unveiled the picture of that well-loved child dwindling to death in the midst of remembered luxuries and tenderest cares.

"To think," she said, "of women who neglect and do not care for their children! Jean, I should hate those women. I read lately that in one tenement-house a child died, and the family simply moved out and abandoned the dead body without a word!"

"I know," shuddered Jean. "It was awful; it happened in our Rents! Such things shall never be there again. But, Mrs. Jennings, if you knew how starved and helpless and miserable they are, and the women so terrorized by the men; the men most of them drink."

"Well, why are they such drunken brutes?"

"I have heard Aunt Prudence and Mr. Moultrie talk of it. These men drink because their parents drank before them, because they were given liquor from childhood, because of the examples about them and the opportunity the law allows on every corner, and because they are out of work, and because they are not well fed. When men are at work and have hearty meals and live where the strong drink is not under their noses at each turn, then there is not nearly so much drunkenness."

"But the women, Jean; some of them drink."

"Yes, from just the same causes as the men, aunt says."

"And those women that do n't drink, why do they stay there and sacrifice themselves and their children to drunken brutes?"

"They are so enslaved by the men, Mrs. Jennings, and they have never been taught how to work well; also work is scarce, not enough for all that need support. They have nothing to work with, no machines, no tubs and irons, while people who need work done keep away from such quarters; they are afraid of violence or contagion. Why, Mrs. Jennings, yesterday I was out with aunt, and when she had left the carriage I saw a street that did not look very bad, so I thought I 'd walk through it. As soon as I entered it a policeman stepped up and walked beside me. A crowd followed us in a minute ; I suppose they thought I was arrested, but when they saw that we were merely talking and that he was showing me things they fell off. The street was short and when we were through it he said, "Now, young lady, do n't you do that again."

"Of course you should not!" cried Mrs. Jennings.

"No. Aunt said it was safer for older and more experienced folks, and I should go with her or the Bible women or nurses. We have engaged such a dear bright sensible elderly woman for a Bible woman and another for a nurse, and they are at work down there already."

"Doing what?"

"Oh, nursing, doctoring, teaching, advising, comforting."

Jean signaled a car and she and Mrs. Jennings took their places. Mrs. Jennings began to find herself carried away by the young girl's eagerness.

"Who is helping your aunt in this work?"

"Mr. Moultrie is doing a great deal. Mr.

Dysart engaged him for John's tutor, and John wont study or do anything for Mr. Moultrie, although Mr. Moultrie is kind and jolly and a great athlete. However, he chases about after John always if he is out of sight."

"I hope John is not going wrong, Jean?"

"That 's one thing I want of you, Mrs. Jennings; help John."

CHAPTER V.

FOR WHOSE SAKE?

Sow and look onward, upward,
  Where the starry light appears,
Where in spite of cowards crowding,
Or your own heart's trembling fears,
You shall reap in joy the harvest
  You have sown to-day in tears."

Mrs. Jennings was holding Prudence Cardiff's hand and looking earnestly into her face. "How have you done it, Prudence?" she asked. "We are of the same age—as many years have passed over you as over me—you have had sorrows I know and you have worked hard; your face shows experiences, for it has more than the strength of youth, but it does not show *wear*."

"Rachel, the Lord called me to work, but he never called me nor any one else to worry. The work is given, but he offers to bear the burden. The work does not kill, it is the burden-bearing that causes overstrain. Beside me has walked my Lord ever ready to help, and I have tried much to cultivate the habit of recognizing that blessed presence."

"Prudence," sighed Mrs. Jennings, "you always walked in a realm that others knew not of."

A sudden call took Miss Prudence from the room. Mrs. Jennings turned to Mr. Moultrie: "It was always so," she said; "as a girl we realized that Prudence was far above our range."

"But on those lofty heights she does not walk alone," said Mr. Moultrie; "with her on her way goes her Lord." Then he smiled, adding, "She sees one Man, the Man Jesus: knows one book, the Bible: has one object, to follow in Christ's steps; not that she is not brilliantly well-informed and of general interest, but these are paramount."

"Where will they lead?" asked Mrs. Jennings.

"Where will what lead," asked Miss Prudence returning.

"The steps of your Leader."

"His led him where he was needed, and I do not wish to go elsewhere," replied Miss Prudence.

"This truly is to find living, Christ, and dying, gain; but I never could attain to it," said Mrs. Jennings, "and since I lost the little one I seem hemmed in by darkness."

"Do not shut yourself in with sorrow; arise, go out to duty, and comfort will be gathered in the busy ways of helping humanity. Those who have been anointed by sorrow are best able to bring to others the comfort with which they themselves have been comforted by God."

Mr. Dysart here entered. "Well, Prudence, how goes it at the Rents?"

"All is ready for the exodus. The houses I have secured are in a decent condition. I offer the new rooms at the rent, sometimes less than the rent, of the old; I remit this present month's rent so that they may start fair; I offer the moving where any moving is to be done—and yet many of the people reluct about going, hold back, are gloomy and suspicious. There are some blatant idlers who say I have 'no right to charge any rent'—'the rich ought to support the poor;' others say they 'do n't want to be bossed;' they want their liberty and 'they wont go where people will interfere about the throwing of a bit of slop into the halls, or where they can't pull up a loose floor-board if they need fire.' But many of them are more than thankful and are anxious for better quarters and better opportunities. My Bible woman has had doors banged in her face and dirty water and ashes flung on her; the nurse has been chased with a club, has been pelted with rotten vegetables, and vituperated. On the other hand both Bible woman and nurse have been by some blessed, welcomed and thanked in the heartiest fashion."

"What do you do with such people!" cried Mrs. Jennings.

"I'm thankful for the reasonable and improvable; I can't say that I am surprised at the brutal; when I consider their surroundings, I wonder how they can be better. In a Christian country the circumstances of these poor have been such as not merely to deface but to efface the image of God."

"And how do you mean to manage it?" asked Mr. Dysart.

"Out of the Rents they all go to-morrow, if I have to call in police force. I hope I shall not be driven to that. Those rough and ready apostles of the change, Rufus Hapgood and Sime Ridder, are busy at work overcoming difficulties; the Bible woman and Home are not without influence, the example of the willing will be helpful, while the fact that really they are as ill off as they can be and a change cannot be a disadvantage, all will help to vacate the Rents."

"In other words this wretched mass of humanity will have to give way as usual before the Cardiff granite; happily the turn of events is in their favor, and the Cardiff granite will be built into their homes," laughed Mr. Dysart. "What are you doing down there, Moultrie, since the pupil I provided will have none of you?"

"I have been overlooking workmen, and renovations at the houses rented for the people to move into. I am getting acquainted with the people so as to understand them better and to form correct judgments about them. Usually the ones loudest mouthed in their own praise or defense, most declamatory against their neighbors, are the laziest, most undeserving rascals in the crowd. I am working toward having a little employment office, where I can, by means of helpers in the business parts of the city find work for men and women according to their abilities. Miss Cardiff feels as I do that there is no greater mismanagement of charity than simply pauperizing people by supplying their needs, while making no effort to raise them to the plane of bread-winners. I am moving toward the establishment of a night-school. Each evening about seven I go to the Rents, and standing in one of the lower halls with my violin, I begin to play old-fashioned simple tunes—'Suwanee River,' 'Annie Laurie,' 'Home, Sweet Home,' 'The Campbells are Coming,' 'Wearing of the Green,' 'Wacht am Rhine.' You 've no idea how the people collect about me, won by the music, a breathless crowd — fighting, crying, jangling all stopped for the time. Then I slowly wander into hymn-tunes, and finally I stop playing and begin to sing hymns, 'Rock of Ages,' 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,' 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' and others. Do you know the favorites are Rouse's version of the Twenty-third Psalm, 'Jerusalem, My Happy Home,' 'Oh, Paradise,' 'Come unto Me when shadows deeply gather,' and 'Jerusalem the Golden?' Well, I sing five or six of them sometimes, and the hush deepens and I see tears in dull eyes and on hard faces. Then I pull out my Testament and read a few verses in the gospels. Most of them listen to that as quietly as to the music; some steal off. When I have read I close my eyes and make a short simple prayer as pat to their needs as I can. When I open my eyes about one-third of my audience are gone—softly gone. However, the police tell me that they make less arrests since that evening worship began. In the hall where I stand we have a big lamp with a big reflector fastened to the wall, and maybe that is not without its moral effect. Evil deeds crave darkness. If tenement-houses were well lit all night in the hall from top to bottom, there would be less crime for the courts to see to, and the light would come cheaper to the city than criminal cases. In a town where I went to college there was a dark vacant lot, pretty well shut in by blank walls, where fights, gambling, drinking, all manner of evil abounded and arrests were made almost every night. The city ordered a big arc light right in the centre of that lot and order reigned."

"I shall have the halls of the renovated Rents abundantly lit," said Miss Prudence.

"John plays well on the flute and cornet," said Mr. Dysart; "can't you coax him to help out your music, Moultrie?"

"I have tried, but he absolutely refuses."

"Mrs. Jennings says we should get John to arrange a gymnasium for himself here at the house; he is fond of athletics and can have his friends practise with him, and Mr. Moultrie taught athletics at college," said Jean. "If John has the gymnasium I will get him to teach me and let me practise with him, and by-and-by, by degrees maybe I can coax him to set up a little gymnasium for the men and boys at the Rents and teach them himself."

"That is a good plan. Try it. But while you do the coaxing I must do some threatening."

Mr. Dysart accordingly threatened. Thus he addressed his ward, "John, it seems you have been having about fifty dollars a month pocket money for two or three years. What do you do with it? I've known men to support families in decency on that amount."

John whistled. "It would n't support me much—cigarettes, theatres, neckties, trinkets—hotel dinners get away with it for me."

"So much money for a lad of your years spent in that way is all a mistake. Cigarettes and late hours will get away with you, my son. I 'm going to halve that allowance to begin with. On the fifteenth of September I shall enter you at Prof. Gray's Academy."

"I wont study," said John grimly.

"You 'd better, my son, or I shall put you into a military school, and there you 'll be allowed no pocket-money. You and I have had many talks, John, and I 've shown you as well as I can the dangers personal to yourself, of some of your methods."

"I expect," sneered John, "that you 'd like to see me a goody boy, spending my time and pennies pampering those slummies down at the Rents as Jean and aunt do."

"You might do worse," said Mr. Dysart. "Philanthropic work properly conducted is no small business; it enlarges our mental and moral outlook. Really why not interest yourself in something of the kind on your own account, for lads of your own age? There are a plenty of them, friendless and forsaken, and you know what lads want. Why not set up a gymnasium on a small scale, instruct in it, conduct it financially on your own plans; let us see what business tact is in you."

"None," said John promptly. "What should

I worry with business for, if I can get on without it? Want me to go down there and set up the 'Cardiff Gym' for slummies? Thanks, awfully; but I 'm not going to do it. I think too much of my name to mix it up with slums."

"See here, my lad, it has not waited for you to do that mixing, it has mixed already. Cardiff and slums have been yoked together in the cognizance of the public for two generations. Cardiff Rents have stood as a synonym for all that is pestilential, criminal, miserable. If a man hailed from there, no one wanted him in even the most menial capacity. The name has gone down into the dirt, John, but it can be lifted."

"Not by me, all the same," said John.

The well-intending bachelor groaned inwardly, and wished any other one than himself had been made guardian of John Cardiff. He knew he would see trouble with him.

Meantime Jean and Aunt Prudence kept on with their work. The kindergarten was established, and Jean persuaded John to go with her to purchase the tables and little chairs, blackboards, number-frames, slates, blocks, and sewing materials. Jean ran a kindergarten on her own lines; she had the children taught to wash dishes and windows, to sew on buttons, mend rips and darn stockings. John thought the buying part rather funny, but he would not visit the school. Amy's mother had secured the place as general care-taker, suggested by Rufus Hapgood.

Mrs. Jennings having gone down Cardiff Rents way with Aunt Prudence and Jean, found her aching mother-heart drawn to the babies—the poor, miserable, starving babies! What could be done for them?

"The nurse at the Women's House of Rest says," said Jean, "that what the babies need is pure milk, fresh air, and soap and water. But how can they get them?"

"They must have them," said Mrs. Jennings; "their big, sad eyes haunt me. They must be helped for my dead baby's dear sake." Then Mrs. Jennings set up a most diligent thinking. "If I could find a clean, reliable woman right in this neighborhood, who would take care of pure milk, and keep it clean and pure, and sell it to mothers for babes—sell it very cheap, or give it where it had to be given! There would be need of a refrigerator."

"I know!" cried Jean clapping her hands. "There is a good refrigerator in our cellar. Father bought two of a new patent, and the old one was put into the cellar; but it is quite good. Two years ago John saw it there and he planned to fasten it up, and play we were burglars, and blow it open. John got some powder, but just as we were arranging it the butler and Mrs. Dall, the housekeeper, came down, and took the powder, and drove us away. Seems queer I could have been so silly two years ago! But there is the refrigerator, and you can have it. I believe I can show you the woman, too. Rufus Hapgood says the very best woman around this neighborhood is the mother of that little Sandy Lindsay. She is a Scotch woman, a widow. Sandy is that little freckled-faced, red-haired boy, who is always hanging about ready to pounce on something to do and do it well."

Jean and Mrs. Jennings were sitting in the kindergarten room, admiring it greatly, for all was ready to begin with the children next day. Amy and her mother were out expounding the merits of the plan, and drumming up children for pupils.

"I believe you have a gift for finding the right people to do work, Jean," said Mrs. Jennings. "There is that Miss Lacy, I found her up in the little hall sewing-room at your house, busy and cheerful, finishing all those blue, brown, and green gingham aprons for the kindergarten."

"I hope I have a gift for something," said Jean, "for I always seem to be making mistakes, and I find, as Aunt Prudence says, that promiscuous giving and reckless charity do more harm than good. A woman wept a dollar out of me with the story of a child to bury, and she got drunk on the dollar and was taken to prison."

"But the child?" queried Mrs. Jennings anxiously.

"All a make up. There was n't any child. She had never had any. She was just 'doing me,' as John says they all are."

"Come, let us go and see that Mrs. Lindsay," said Mrs. Jennings, picking up her parasol.

Following the directions given by Rufus Hapgood, they presently found themselves before a basement, half of it sunk below the pavement and rising in a line of square windows above the walk. The windows were clean, and displayed a variety of garments—frocks, aprons, underwear. The window-seats were wide, and were stocked with cards of buttons of all makes and sizes, little flaps or cushions of pins, small boxes of hooks and eyes, handkerchiefs and stockings nicely darned, a few dolls and toys; everything clean, orderly and evidently second or third hand. The steps were clean, leading into a very clean room where a girl of twelve, a cripple, was busily preparing buttons and such other articles as lay on the window-seat.

A careworn, kindly, middle-aged woman was by a table cutting over garments, a pile of such work being on the end of the table, apparently in readiness for the adjacent sewing-machine.

"I am Mrs. Jennings, and this is Miss Cardiff. We came to talk to you about a little plan we have."

"Aye, you and the bonny young leddy are mair than welcome. Sandy has been tellin' us aboot the guid wark is being done at yon Rents. Not before it was needed, sure eneuch."

"We wish to do some further work—for the little children, and we want you to help us."

"I'd be juist mair than bye ordinar glad to help, gif I ony ways can. It is the guid Lord sends you to lend a han' to the weary an' heavy-laden."

Jean turned brightly. "You make me think of a verse aunt read to me in the Bible this morning: "'We sing the Lord's song in a strange land.'"

"Aye. It begins 'How can we!' An' 'How can we sing the Lord's song here!' Many is the time I said it to myself when first I came here. But I found that sure eneuch we can sing it wherever he calls us, and I am sure he called me here, though at the first I didna feel sae sure aboot it."

"Tell us all about it," said Jean; she and

Mrs. Jennings had been given chairs near the table, and Widow Lindsay, as she talked, still worked with amazing quickness and precision, cutting little garments out of worn large ones. A door across the entry opened, and Sandy came out with two small paper boxes of buttons, hooks and eyes, and pins. These he handed to the cripple. He left the door open behind him, and Jean saw a room full of rags and old garments, as if, as was truly the case, dozens of rag-bags and barrels had there been emptied. Sandy smiled at the visitors, went back to the room and came out with one arm laden with ragged gowns, capes, aprons, the other with white goods. These he carried to a room beyond the one Jean sat in; as he entered it she saw a young woman vigorously washing.

"Here 's more, Janey."

"Throw 'em down," said Janey.

"There, mither, they 're all sorted; and here 's a dime I found, and a bit dollie, and a cloth cat, and a knife. That 's all, forbye a little toy picture-book, I forgot that."

"Ball the rags to be carted awa'," ordered his mother.

Sandy disappeared in the rag-room and shut the door.

"This interests me," said Jean, "Tell us about it."

"Aye, a puir widow woman's story is interestin' to nane but hersel', I 'm thinkin', leddies. It 's no long, hoosoever. I was born in Scotlan', an' I had a sister aulder then me, a sonsie lassie, who early marriet a neer-do-weel callant an' cam' to Ameriky. We could tell by her letters she was no' gettin' on weel, nor was she happy. She had a wheen bairns; some died an' some lived; in sic streets as these, bairns have it hard to struggle for life."

"Yes; that is what I must talk to you about," said Mrs. Jenings.

"Well my faither and mither died, and the brithers were marriet and had their own hard ways to mak in the worl', an' Sandy was a bit bairn a year old—eleven is Sandy the noo'—when my man died sudden-like, an' at that verra time cam' news my puir sister was dead, leavin four bairns under nine, an' the least one, Aggie yon, a cripple. It seemed the Lord called me to come an' do for them, an' I came. I 'd ha' come gif I 'd known what I was coming to, but I did na, and it is a mercy the dear Lord veils what is beyond us fro' oor eeen, an' leads us but ae step at a time! When I came here," and Mistress Lindsay looked about her with decent pride, "this place was grimed wi' dirt. My puir sister had lain four months in hospital. Yon steps were broken, the window panes half gone, walls black, floor—weel, ye could n't see *what* the floor wes; an' here was four weans, thin, ragged, dirty, puir Janey tryin' her best to be a mither to them. I canna tell ye leddies hoo my hairt died awa we'in me when I saw it a'. Puir an' hard worken' I aye had been, but clean an' decent, an' respecktit. Ance my een rested on they childer, my hairt clave to them a'. I could na mair ha gane back an' lef' them to perish, than I could ha' lef' my wee Sandy, forbye I had ony a few punds left, an' had given up a' my wark i' my auld hame. Weel, I pit it to Jock Moore, my brither-in-law, he suld get a mair decent place, an' I wed be faithfu' to the childer, an help him airn a leevin'; an' he wed na. He said here he an' the childer suld stay, an' I micht take em' or leave 'em, where I fund 'em. He had been a wild, noisy, spendthrift loon ance, an' the noo he waur changed to a dour, close-fisted grum'lin body. I canna say I liket him ony better ane way nor the ither. I canna bear swearin' an' Sabba-breakin', an that 's Jock Moore's way. Hoosoever he micht be waur, he never drinks, an' he never lift his han' or feet against any; an gif a mon kens hoo to keep his place like that, a woman can thole him some way, but Jock an' I do no say much to t' ither.

My mither used to say til me I hed no dowry but common sense, an' common sense aye worket wi' the tool at han'. Sae I pullt mysen together, an' I told Jock I had a bit o' furniture wi me, an' gif he wad promise to pay six months rent ahead, I could get the lendlord to fix us up a bit. So Jack grummeled, an' swore, but he did it. The landlord took pity of me. 'My woman,' says he, 'the place killed your sister, an your 're too good for it! 'Aye' I seys, 'but sin' the Lord pits me here, I can thole it. Na doot I have work to do.' So I hired two rooms on the top story, wi' sun in 'em, for bed-rooms for me an the childer, an Jock sleeps, wull ye believe it, in the rag-room! The landlord pit new windows, an steps, an floors in for me, an' whitewash I laid on thick, an' I bought paint an' Jock painted nights, and when it was weel cleaned I ha' kep it sae. Ye may guess I cleaned up the childer first o' a'; an' sin I had bocht to America a big chest fu' o' goods—same as if I was comin' to a wild country, I kenned sae little o' the place—I made oop claes for them a'. Then there was yon room chock fu' o' rags, which Jock didna sell, because he said he had na' the time to rip them a' oop an' sort them a'. Dy'e ken the loon hes a dream o' findin' a fortin sewed up in the linin's o' some o' the rags? He says he 's heard o' sic doins. So the childer an' I sorted for him, an' he helpit o' nichts, an' I found noo an agen hale new claes, and kerchers an' sic, stuffed careless in the rags—also many pairt worn things, and toys, pictures, buttons, buckles, pins, as ye see Aggie yon warkin over. Sae I set up this shop, makin' over claes an' sellin notions; an' I sell cheap verra, o' what hes cost nae mair than a cent an a half a pund. Ye wad no think it, but I ha' fed an' clothed a' the childer oot o' this wark. Jock dinna pay but the rent an' the coal. Some say he hoards what he airns, some say he gambles it; I canna tell, but I'm main sure that it is not as he says, when he vows he maks nae mair than his claes, an' the keep o' his horse an' cart, an' the rent an' coal, ha, ha!"

"Did you ever find money in the rags?" asked Jean.

"Na, leddy, forebye a copper, or a dime whiles. But I ha' laid oop a few dollars, sae the city need na bury us. Janey helps me, doin' washin; she's a good lass; an' Aggie, she's a graun help. Jamie gangs wi' his daddy for rags, an' Alice, the ither lass, I got a fine hame in the country whaur she gangs to school, an' has a' she could ask for. Noo I have talkit oer lang o' my puir doins."

"We are greatly interested," said Mrs. Jennings. "I came to see about setting up a little milk dépôt, to give pure fresh country milk to the babies about here. I want to provide a refrigerator, ice the milk, some one to take charge, and a hundred nursing bottles, that will be exchanged as filled, so that the person in charge can keep them clean, and give the clean bottle with the fresh milk. My idea is to sell the milk cheap, and where it cannot be paid for the dépôt shall give it at discretion. Tell me is such a work needed here?"

"Aye, madam, gif its worth while to save the puir babbies' life an' sufferrin. Why only yesterday, a puir woman on the next street had finally succedeed in findin a bit wark, an' in gettin leave to bring her baby to a free day-nursery. She took the puir wean there, an' it died in her airms as she sat there wi' it—died o' weakness an' starvation! An' the puir mither fainted, an' they fand' her just a skeleton, an' she had no had food eneuch for a month to keep a birdee aleeve. It made me greet that I no had known o' her, to share my bit sup wi' her! Gif there had been a sign oop aboot milk, baith might hae been saved."

"There ought to be sterilized milk, and all that," said Mrs. Jennings; "but to begin the venture this season, I can just have pure new milk from healthy well fed country cows. I know where friends will send me in cans of such milk. Can you, Mrs. Lindsay, take charge of it, and have the dépôt here? I will pay you for your trouble, serving the milk and cleaning the bottles."

"Aggie could do it a' bravely, wi' me to overlook her a wee. See, madam, a sign yon on the walk; the refrigerator could stan' there, an' beside it we wad hae a galvanized iron tub, wi' water plenty an' soda intil it, to wash the bottles. I hae water, the landlord pit us a tap in yon kitchen. Aye, I'll just be made, to hae sic a wark o' luve to do; an' I ken the people aboot here—them as can, an' them as canna pay. Ah, it is a blessed thought!"

"I could have the ice served daily; that would cost sixty cents; and perhaps you can take in enough milk money to pay for the ice, and for new nipples for the bottles as they give out. We will get the bottles and nipples wholesale. Then if there is extra money I want loaves a day old, bought and served out in large pieces to the children too old for bottles and under four years of age. It makes me sick to think of such little creatures starving."

"Aye. When wull we begin, madam?"

"To-morrow I will send the tub, bottles, and refrigerator; the ice and milk will be served the next morning."

"Aye, aye. I'll have that long to let it be known."

Miss Cardiff had come with the carriage. "There," said Mrs. Jennings, as she took her place in it, "this woman proves what I said, where there is a will there is a way, and this beggary is from sheer shiftlessness. Think, she is decent *down here*, and they live on—rags!"

"But, consider. She had a decent religious up-bringing, she had a little store of clothes, money, and furniture to start on, and she was a woman grown, with character fixed, before she came into these surroundings," said Miss Prudence.

"I suppose there is something in that," admitted Miss Jennings.

CHAPTER VI.

CARDIFF GRANITE.

> " Only a sweet and virtuous soul
> Like seasoned timber never gives."

"TO-MORROW," said Jean at the breakfast-table, " they are going to begin work on Cardiff Rents, and to-day Sime Ridder is going to go for the rats there. There must be thousands of them; they run about like cats; I 've seen them myself."

" What 's that?" demanded John; " rat-catching? How?"

" I do n't know. Sime Ridder is going to do it. He is a rat-catcher; that is all he does. He goes to houses and hotels."

" Ferrets?" queried John with interest.

" I can't tell. I never asked. If you want to know let us go down there in the dog-cart and you can see him and talk to him. Sime is just as interesting as one of the men in Dickens' tales that you like so much. So is Rufus Hapgood; *he* keeps a coffee-stall, but used to be a well-off young man, went to college, and our coachman Louis drove for his uncle. It 's so. Louis says so."

" Whew!" said John; " well, I do n't care if I do go with you. Remick, tell somebody I want the dog-cart double-quick."

The Cardiff Rents were deserted : doors and windows, where there were any, were open, and only a few dirty children and blear-eyed old people crawled about the empty rooms haunting their former lairs. As the dog-cart drove up there was a shrill cry, "Hi, Sime! yere 's the leddy! Hi there, Sime!" Out came Mr. Ridder in his flapping felt hat, his broad broken shoes, and wearing a denim suit of trowsers and jacket with numerous big pockets. The pockets wriggled and squirmed, giving Mr. Ridder a queer look as if his clothes were as much alive as himself. He held a big rat in each hand. The rats blinked and twisted a little but seemed to have no strong objection to Mr. Ridder. Mr. Ridder was smoking a short black pipe, which, on seeing Jean, he politely deposited on a window ledge. As he lifted his hand to do so the sharp nose of a rat stuck out from Mr. Ridder's sleeve.

"What do you do with all those rats, Mr. Ridder?" asked Jean.

"Sell 'em to a man by the wharf as skins 'em."

"What for?"

"Skins are tanned to make kid gloves of, Miss."

Jean looked at her gloves with disgust and suspicion.

"Cheaper kind than you wear, Miss," said Sime consolingly.

"I say, Ridder, how do you do it?" asked John patronizingly.

"Why, you see, sir, if I told you that would be heaving my whole trade overboard. I worked it out by a deal of thinking long ago when I was a hand on lumber schooners. Tell you what, it takes a heap of sense to circumwent rats; they be the longest headed cattle livin'. I believe Satan hisself conspires in 'em. I'm the best rat-catcher ever was, and I ought to make enough to keep me an' 'Mandy Ann in comfort, but I don't. I 'low I have my failin's."

"But the rats," insisted John, "do you poison 'em?"

"No I don't. You can't poison 'em all, only a few; they's too long-headed. An' for every one you poisons two comes to the funeral. Then people don't want dead rats 'tween the floor; 't aint healthy."

"Do you trap them?" urged John.

"No, I don't trap 'em; they'd catch on to that mighty soon; they're too knowin' to be trapped. Folks ain't, but rats is. See this big un?" said Mr. Ridder dragging a huge rat from his shirt pocket and holding him up by the neck;

"caught him with my hands just now; laid for him by his hole and grabbed him. 'Fraid of him, Miss? No, a rat never shows fight 'cept he sees you 're scared. No, I 'm not scared, an' the rats knuckle right down."

"Ferrets?" persisted John; "terriers? Do you use them?"

"Well, I 've got a terrier or two an' a ferret or two, but I do n't tie partic'lar to 'em. I 've got a corral for rats in two or three places in these buildings now, and those rat corrals will have hundreds in 'em pretty soon. In five days there wont be a rat in these Rents to speak of."

"If it is so easy why did n't you rid them out before?" demanded John.

Sime looked surprised. "Why nobody offered to pay me for it. An' they wan't my houses, and no one else cared to better 'em. Why should I? Now the ladies are trying to better things, I 'm going for the rats, and I 'm proud to do it without pay too, only what I get for the rats—a nickel a score." Sime selected a big rat from his pocket and eyed him closely.

"Charm them?" demanded John much excited.

"No, sir, I do n't charm 'em." He painted the rat's back with phosphorus and set the creature on the floor; it disappeared like a flash.

"Fight 'em ever?" inquired John.

"It 's agin the law. S'ciety fur Prewention 'ud be after me quicker 'n a wink. No, I keep within laws."

"Not likely to be much fun watching *you*," said John, and rolling up a five-dollar bill he tossed it to Sime, but in a fashion that aroused no gratitude though Sime pocketed the money. Jean had never given him any money; she had helped him to a better living and had provided a country home for his wife and child, and in a shy pretty way had sent the baby money for clothing. Sime could have fallen down and worshipped her; he felt more of a man and more drawn toward decency when she spoke to him.

"Come, let us go and see Rufus Hapgood," said Jean as John drove on. "You 'll find him interesting."

"Pooh! I do n't find such paupers interesting. Glad I 'm rich."

"Well, John, so I am glad in one way. I think that the really rich are those who have learned to share with others and give happiness, whether they do it by money or words or kindness or helping."

John turned and looked closely at his sister. "Jean, I used to feel the oldest; now you seem much older than I."

"You see, John, I 've been doing a great deal of thinking lately, and I 've found so much to think about."

"These people, you mean? They 're poor subjects for thought."

"Depends upon how you look at them," said Jean. They had stopped before Hapgood's stall, and as he was serving meals to three or four men they waited.

"How many ways are there of looking at them, Jean?"

Jean said slowly:

"Said Christ our Lord, 'I will go and see
How the men, my brothers, believe in me.'
He passed not again through the gate of birth,
But made himself known to the children of earth.

"Then Christ sought out an artizan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man;
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her family want and sin.

"These set he in the midst of them;
And as they drew back their garment's hem
For fear of defilement: 'Lo, here,' said He,
'The images ye have made of me.'"

"I suppose," said John, "that those fellows eating at the stall are the 'stunted, haggard men,' and this draggled one coming along the walk is the girl."

Jean leaned forward. The young girl came slowly with a dragging step, her face pale, her eyes cast down.

"Is that you, Bessie Lowther?" cried Jean.

"Yes, Miss, that's my name. I lived in the Rents."

"And now you are moved to the other house. Do you like it?"

"Aunt turned me out, Miss. I'm out of work this six weeks. I was dish-washer in an eating-stall and it's broken up and I could n't pay my share, and aunt could n't keep me. I've looked for work till I'm beat out. There *ai n't* any work. There's too many of we, so there is. There ought to be a cholera or yellow-fever break out to carry us off."

Having thus unconsciously ranged herself beside Malthus, Bessie stood sighing hopelessly. Jean thought of asking her where she had sheltered over night, but she had already learned that silence in some directions is pure gold.

"Have you had breakfast, Bessie?"

Bessie shook her head.

"Mr. Hapgood," cried Jean, "here's Bessie Lowther waiting for her breakfast. Give her the best meal you have."

Rufus hurried to pull out a high stool and to pour coffee. Jean sat looking intently at nothing.

"What are you thinking about?" asked John.

"About what work I can find for that girl. I can't take her to our house. She could n't even wash steps or dishes to suit our cook or Mrs. Dall, and then our servants would n't stand having such an untidy girl among them."

"Of course not," said John; "what does she let herself be such a guy for? Why do n't she know something well? It is all her own fault. You 've no call to fret over her."

"Oh, John! what opportunity has the poor soul had to be anything nice, to learn any work well? Suppose I had had no more chance for myself than she has!"

"Pooh! why do n't you say 'suppose I had been Nebuchadnezzar' and done with it."

"Suppose I had, then," said Jean with a laugh. The three men and the girl turned from their eating at the sound. That bubble of happy laughter, how strangely it came into the echoes of those grim, hopeless places!

Rufus Hapgood came to the wheel of the dog-cart, and to him as to Ridder John talked in lofty, condescending fashion, and tossed him a silver dollar when he turned away, as one gives largess without heart therein.

When the girl had finished eating Jean called her. "Bessie, I think I can find a place for you, at least until you can do better for yourself, if you 'll take it."

"It's not in nature," said Bessie, "that I can refuse any thing. I can't stop out o' doors many nights."

"Go around to 40 Peel Street and wait for me; there's a sign out, 'Fresh Milk and Bottles for Babies.'"

"See here," said John half-amused, half-sulky, "am I roped in to go to more places with you? All I bargained for was the rat-catcher."

"I think you'll have to go, John, unless you leave me to walk and come home alone."

"Not much I wont leave you; but the more a silly you, to get yourself tangled up with such people and places."

"I like it, I am happier for doing something of the much that needs to be done. If I withheld help I think I should hear the great cry of the miserable rising up night and day, and it would break my heart."

"You need not have known a word about it. Aunt Prudence ought to be ashamed of herself showing you such things. Why could n't she leave you to be jolly and amuse yourself," said John angrily.

"I'm glad she did not, John. I feel as if my living would be worth something, and I myself would be worth far more than I was before I knew. I think, John, that when we live simply for ourselves and to amuse ourselves, that self-serving must lead us on and on to self-destroying. You see, when I am resting, or alone, or awake at night, as I cannot use my eyes, I think, and it is in this way that I think."

"Takes all the fun out of life and makes it tragic."

"Mr. Moultrie was reading to us last evening, and I remember this sentence, 'The world is always a tragedy to those who feel.' Stop here, John, and let me get out. This is Mrs. Jennings' Milk Depot for babies and there is Bessie."

Jean ran down into the basement. As she went she heard a woman who was buying a bottle of milk say, "I do believe, Miss Lindsay, that this milk will be the makin' of my poor baby. Says Jake to me, 'Suke, you buy the little un' all the milk she needs. I 'm good fur it,' says he. Ye see, Miss Lindsay, my other three jes wilted away and Jake seems real sot on this 'un. He ai n't been drunk since she came."

"So you see, my woman," spoke up Janey Moore who stood by, "if you save the baby you are like to save your man too. A big strong wharf-hand like that can make good wages, an' if he keeps from drink and you do your part, time will come when you can move into a better quarter and set up nice. But let me tell you it ai n't only pure clean milk a baby needs, it is a clean skin and pure air. Your baby needs a good washing, and a good washing every day. Trip back with me to the kitchen and I 'll give you a pail of nice warm suds, and you scrub that child clean. Then go home and scrub your room, floor, windows, all that 's in it. When Jake comes home have it so tidy that he 'll get some lime and whitewash the walls for baby's sake. Half days, if he 's out of work, make the baby clean and get him to go out to the Park with her for a few hours' fresh air. It is all in your own hands, woman, whether you 'll have a nice home and a good man or not."

Janey and the woman disappeared in the kitchen, and Mrs. Lindsay turned with pride toward Jean. "Weel, I 'm juist made oop, that ye heard an' saw oor Janey. Dis' na she speak by the book? Is' na she weel learned? She reads an' reads, nichts, oot o' the buiks an' papers her feyther brings hame in the rags. Janey 's got a hall shelf, the room's length, oop the stair, juist filled wi' readin'. She bides here at this wark, on account o' Aggie an' me, sin Jock will no move oot o' this. An' mebbe the Lord is in it a'; for sure he 's over it a', an' we may be keepit here for the guid o' ithers."

"Maybe you are here to-day for the good of Bessie Lawther, that girl out on the walk." Jean hastily stated Bessie's case. "If you could help her until she finds work, if you can help her to find work, and if Janey could teach her a little about being neat and so on, why, I 'll pay her board, Mrs. Lindsay."

"Noo!" cried Mrs. Lindsay holding up both hands admiringly, "hoo do things juist fit intil ilk ither, pat! We are thronged wi' wark noo. The Dépôt takes aboot all Aggie's time, an' I never see sic a heap o' claes as is in the rags, an' oor trade is increasin' too. Janey says to me, gif we could get a lass to help, wha' would take oop wi' her board and claes, we could fin' claes eneuch for the washin' an' mendin' o' them, an' it wad be guid schulin' for the lass, to do the washin' an' mendin' hersel' under my teachin'."

Jean accordingly called Bessie in and explained the situation. "Ye can hae a guid wash, an' Janey wull gie ye an outsettin' o' claes to pit upon ye at once," said Mrs. Lindsay, "an' we can mak' ye oop a bed in the corner o' Janey's room, till we see hoo things turn out. Dinna greet, gif ye 'll be a guid decent lass, an' bide at hame, we 'll help you a' we hae in our pooer. Whist, lassie, the Lord nae doot watches o'er ye for guid."

"Well, come," said John as Jean returned to the sidewalk. "Are you ready at last to get out of this? What did you find to amuse you in that basement? The idea of your bidding good-bye to that low truck, Jean, as if they were your best friends!"

"They are children of my Father which is in heaven."

They rode on, Jean looking very thoughtful.

"What's wrong now?" asked John.

"I'm trying to make a plan," said Jean. "Mrs. Jennings has Mrs. Lindsay give away many bottles of milk, and she gives out five loaves of bread a day in pieces to the little tots; but they need more milk to give away, and that ought to be sterilized milk for the poorest and sickest. I'm thinking, John, if I can have five gallons set aside at our Wildbrook farm, and have 'Mandy Ann, Mr. Ridder's wife, sterilize it and have it sent in with the rest, and the tickets for it given out free."

"Let me tell you," said John, "the sterilized milk, bottle and all, would be traded for a glass of grog. That's all the good your babies would get out of it."

"I don't believe that people would be so bad," cried Jean, tears rushing to her eyes, "and Mrs. Lindsay could see to it."

"People are just so bad," said John. "I flung out some cents and nickels and dimes for the fun of seeing the kids scramble in the dirt for them, and one kid got a dime. Just as he was being joyful over it a big red woman he called mammy hove along, took the dime and went right into a grog-shop and bought gin. I saw her do it."

"What a hateful wicked world this is!" sobbed Jean.

"Yes; you 're idealizing these people. They are miserable because they are rascals, and you wont believe it. You think they 're good. Not a bit of it. You 'll find out."

Jean found out to the bitterness of her spirit. Poor Jean! She took a long face to Dr. Imley's on the morning of her regular bi-weekly visit. Her smiles were fled. She looked dreary and discouraged.

"What is it, Jean, my girl," said the doctor. "Are you worrying about yourself? You are doing very well. You make progress. You can't measure it, but I can."

"It is not myself that discourages me, doctor. I can't feel as if there really is any thing wrong with me; it is those people—those men! I thought they would be good if they had a chance. I felt proud that they were improving. Ridder's wife is very nice, and the baby is getting fat; I hoped they 'd come home well, to be all so comfortable and happy. Now what do you think! Sime Ridder and Rufus Hapgood are off—drinking. Hapgood 's stall and Sime's room are shut, and they have been drinking two days. Wicked creatures! I feel as if it is no use to try, as if I never wanted to see them again. They had been sober nine weeks, but now to think for it, when all was going so comfortably with them. I 'll never again believe that they want to do right. It is plain that they just like to be bad, the horried creatures!"

The doctor's face altered suddenly as he looked at the indignant girl. From being a smoothed and pleasing mask, hiding many cares and weighty opinions under a look of genial encouragment, it became as an open window out of which leaned the man's soul, and showed him the scarred veteran of many spiritual battles and many a hard won victory.

The girl faced him, her eyes clear and earnest, mouth firm and sweet, the chin strongly moulded, skin clean and healthy; he noted the calm even rise and fall of her chest, the full and tranquil pulse-beats, like the slumbering sea. Even her indignation had but disturbed her fortunate physique sufficiently to deepen a little the pink tint of her cheeks. What could this vigorous, innocent creature, still on the border-land of childhood, understand of those stormy abnormal natures that struggled like baited wild beasts taken in toils?

"My child," said the doctor, "come down from the judgment throne. These men may be heroes, even though they fall. Believe me, any one of them resists more temptation in a week of decent living, than you are likely to encounter in your whole life. How blessedly well it is, that in our Lord and Judge we sinners have not to do with angels, or even with our placid and little-tempted brethren of the flesh, but with One who 'knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust.'"

"I know," said Jean, as her eyes fell, "that you think I am a very poor person to undertake to try to help people—when I have no more patience than this! I 'm as bad as a child that squeals with rage because its toys fall over. Perhaps I should give it up."

"Never, never, my child; and from being discouraged about your struggling, failing men, do n't go to being in despair about yourself. It demands often more of heroism to live down the small worries of life, than to face its great disasters. Whatever you do, do not deplete your working powers by worrying over your work. Remember what your Aunt Prudence says, that it is not possible to do our work and at the same time carry its burdens. We are commanded to do the work, and to cast our cares and burdens on Him who careth.

"I shall never be like Aunt Prudence," sighed Jean.

"Probably not, she has been annealed in the fires of affliction and the deep cold waters of endurance for conscience' sake. She has had not merely the trial of family coldness, and living exiled and poor, but other sorrows, even deeper, of which she never speaks. Do n't think it needful to be just like your aunt; every one is better for being excellent on his own pattern and retaining his individuality. Keep up your courage and work on. 'Youth,' says Plato, 'is the time for toil.' Consider how worth doing your work is. I often think of a saying of Humboldt's: "Governments, religion, property, books, are but the scaffolding to build a man. Earth holds up to her Maker no fruit but the finished man." You are working to make man, generic man, embracing man and woman in the word, out of the little children you are helping; and you are working to arrest man in his degradation toward the beast, and lift him into Christian manhood. It is a good work that ennobles the doer and his object."

Jean usually thought when she left Dr. Imley's office, that the mental good she received outweighed even the benefit of his prescription.

A day or two after she drove down to the Rents with her aunt. Mr. Moultrie was in the buildings overlooking the work. Miss Prudence went in and left Jean setting in the coupé. Furtively peeping at her around a corner she saw Rufus Hapgood, while leaning against a wall, his hat jammed well down over his face, was Sime Ridder. Jean at once left the coupé and went toward them, they started as if to escape—then lingered. "I want you to go home, Mr. Ridder," she said, "your room is shut up, and you are needed there.

"Why, Miss, I do n't feel as if I could face Miss Cardiff ever again—the light she tried to give me, and me going back the way I did! P'raps you do n't know I've been—"

"Oh, yes, I do," said Jean with a smile; "you did n't think there 'd be no one to tell, did you? But surely you are not going to forsake that nice room and all the things you have put in it, when 'Mandy Ann is planning so about coming home with that cunning baby; you 're not going to drag them down, are you?"

"Poor 'Mandy Ann! She allus forgives me, Miss."

"All the more reason for doing the best you can for her. Go home and try it over again, Mr. Ridder; do you know there 's a verse in the Bible, aunt read it to me last night: 'Rejoice not over me, oh mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise.' That 's for you too, Mr. Hapgood. Wont you go right back and open your stall? Aunt and I would be glad."

"Last night," said Sime, "him an' me hung about out of sight while Mr. Moultrie was playing and singing."

"You be there to-night full in sight, helping sing."

"You really mean us to try it over again?" asked Sime.

"Sure; and trust more to God for holding you up next time."

That was not their last falling away, but Jean learned to have patience, like 'Mandy Ann, not only with these but with others. Bessie Sawther more than once wearied of the strictures of Mrs. Lindsay and Janey, and ran off to other quarters, even hiring out as bar-maid, and running back at night, weeping with terror at a homicide scene. But coming she was always restored; Jean had learned to forgive.

CHAPTER VII.

'MANDY ANN.

> " Leave the poor
> Some time for self-improvement. Let them not
> Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms
> For bread, but have some space to think, and feel,
> Like happy and immortal creatures."

ON the last day of October a light spring wagon drove up to what was popularly styled "The New Rents," because in them Miss Cardiff had temporarily placed her tenants until that synonym for evil, "Cardiff Rents," should stand forth reconstituted and offering better possibilities. "The New Rents" had no broken steps, doors, nor windows; frowzy heads, dirty faces, and ragged garments were to be seen in it, but as people passed its thresholds, no foul mephitic stench rolled forth to meet them. The majority of the children were in the public-school or in Jean's kindergarten; a nurse and a Bible woman made daily rounds, helping people, while yearnings toward decency sprung up in their footsteps. The room of Sime Ridder, a corner room downstairs, had white curtains and a flower-pot of blooming geraniums in the window. The opposite room was pretty well filled with steam, for a big, red-armed woman was washing. Nurse and Bible woman had vainly tried to introduce some order into the operation, she still heaped the soiled clothes on every piece of furniture in the room, and threw into her tub promiscuously, white clothes, calicos or flannels. The washing was big. She had six children, and also washed for some of her neighbors. When the wagon stopped, 'Mandy Ann Ridder climbed, baby in arms, over the wheel, and the lad who drove began to unload various bundles, bags, and boxes, wherewith 'Mandy Ann's new friends in the country had laden her. The big woman, Mrs. Gess, abandoned her tub, gave a cursory glance at her baby tied into a high chair, wiped the suds from her arms, and bunched herself in full tide of talk at 'Mandy Ann. "O my goodness me! Air you back, 'Mandy Ann! I should say! don't you look well! That the new baby? Ain't it a nice, pert-lookin little trick! And how are you, 'Mandy Ann, I 'm glad to see you indeed, whatever.' "

A swarm of youngsters suddenly appeared, coming from all quarters as flies to spilled sugar. Mrs. Gess beheld them swooping down upon a basket of red apples and immediately dealt out shakes, cuffs, slaps, with the greatest impartiality.

"Here, 'Mandy Ann, tuck the baby under your arm and take a hand with me on this halfbushel basket, or there wont be an apple left to bless yerself with. You young man, have an eye to them pertaters till we carry 'em in too; these youngsters ain't no wise pertic'ler what they gets, so they gets suthin'."

The young man who drove the wagon laughed, and from a bag beneath his feet produced apples and walnuts which he threw out to the eager children. 'Mandy Ann also came back with five or six red apples which she gave to the most miserable-looking of the gutter pirates.

"Ain't it a pity," she said, looking at the young man, "that out there in the country the apples is fair lyin' rottin' on the ground 'cause they ain't quite good enough to sell, and all along the fences an' pastures there's logs an' stumps an' big branches, no end o' good wood to burn, crumblin' away, an' poor old women like you cripplin' round the street day in an' out to find bits o' fuel."

"It's a plumb shame," said the young man handing her the last of her bundles. "I've a mind the first holiday I gets to harness up a two-horse wagon with truck, like wood an' apples an cabbage and turnips we country folks is wastin', and bring it here to give away. Is this what you call a slum? Well it *is* awful bad sure an' certain."

"This bad!" cried Mrs. Gess bristling up, "why we call this most respecful; yer jes' orter seen Cardiff Rents!"

Mrs. Gess began to help 'Mandy Ann to put her belongings away. Not that 'Mandy Ann needed any help, for she laid the baby on the clean bed and was quite able to attend to her own affairs, but Mistress Gess wanted to talk.

"Sime Ridder wan't 'spectin' yer to-day, 'Mandy Ann, but yer see he 's all ready for you."

"Ai n't it beautiful!" said 'Mandy Ann. "Yes, I had to come in when the wagon was comin', not to bother folks nor take their time. They 've been mighty good to me, so they have. I did n't reckon on seein' you, Miss Gess. Sime, when he come to see me, was so took up with the baby he did n't hardly tell me a word. I laid out as soon as Gess got out of hospital he 'd be movin' you to some other street, seein' you only went to Cardiff Rents along of the pinch you was in with so many children an' a new one, an Gess with two legs broke."

"That 's true enough, 'Mandy Ann, but yer sees this ai n't nowise like Cardiff Rents was; this is far an' away better; an' when Cardiff Rents is done over I tell you it is goin' to be decent. Miss Cardiff she 'lowed she wanted some niceish folk to set examples here, an', tho' Gess an' me do n't claim to be over an' above half-way decent, we reckoned we 'd serve her turn better nor most of 'em and be comfortable ourselves. 'Spose Sime did n't tell you the news 'bout Gess, did he now?"

"What news?" demanded 'Mandy Ann, as interested as if Gess was likely to have been elected alderman.

"Why," replied her friend with great pride, "Gess has went an' got converted! There 's a Mr. Moultrie singin' an' prayin' an' helping round among the men gen'rally, an' he got Gess work as soon as he come from hospital; an' if you 'll believe it, 'Mandy Ann, him an' Gess they sot one night right out there on the curbstone talkin' 'bout Gess's immortal soul, an' gettin' to heaven, an' God-have-mercy-on-you, an' all that, right on the *curbstone* if you 'll believe me, talkin' of things like that. An' Gess he got converted then an' there on the curbstone, mind you, an' he come in lookin' strange and sez he, 'J'rushy Gess, if the Lord did all that for me I 'm goin' to be his man from this out,' he says, 'Him helpin' me;' an' if you 'll believe it, 'Mandy Ann, he 's stayed converted ever sence, though Gess never was so ravin' bad as some men—right out on the curbstone, I tell you!" And Mistress Gess studied the indicated curbstone that had to her husband become a golden milestone on the way to the New Jerusalem.

"Any more of 'em converted," urged 'Mandy Ann.

"No more of 'em 'less it's ole Mrs. Martin, and she 'lows she's got glory in her soul; but she allus was a good sort."

"Wish Sime had got converted," said 'Mandy Ann.

"Take an awful lot to convert Sime, would n't it, now?" suggested Mistress Gess. "Sime's terrible hard set."

'Mandy Ann filled a basin with apples and potatoes and requested Mistress Gess to accept the offering. Mrs. Gess thanked her heartily. "Not that we ai n't doin' fairish well ourselves. Gess is workin' an' I work. I 'm willin' enough to do my share an' help out a livin' for them as will help theirselves; but if so be they intends jest to lay back an' smoke an' let me do all the work, they 'll find they has to pile on for theirselves or go empty. 'Git up an' git,' is my motto, 'Mandy Ann. But I ain't a faultin' Gess; he allus was a decentish man even before he and Mr. Moultrie sat on the curbstone." Then Mistress Gess heard her youngest screaming wildly in the high chair, and remembered that there was a meal to get and a washing to finish.

While 'Mandy Ann was thus welcomed to her new home, Jean was in her own room when John pushed the door open after a light knock.

"I say, Jean, I want you to help me down Dysart."

"What!" exclaimed Jean.

"Dysart; he 'll be on his ear you know. I 've been expelled from Prof. Gray's academy for young gentlemen."

"Oh, John! What did you do?"

"Nothing. That is what he had the temerity to complain of. I made sure he 'd stand a good bit before he turned out a fellow of my money; but he complained that I was late and absent and did not appear in my classes, and so on."

"Oh, John! Could n't you have tried."

"Did n't I say I would n't? Now I want you to stand up for me to Dysart a little; he always liked you better than he did me."

"Every one would like you much the best, John, if you took the least pains to make them; you are naturally so much brighter and nicer and all that."

John laughed. "Gray did n't think so, and I 'm in Dysart's black books; I 've been getting into debt. Who could get on with only twenty-five dollars to spend in a month? I say, Jean, I 'm out and it will be a week before Dysart will come down with any more. Lend me a ten?"

Jean's allowance of fifty dollars a month had been undiminished. She had found plenty of uses for her money: the kindergarten and the milk depot had taken much of it, and several pining little ones had had a country vacation. She had in her purse a ten-dollar bill which she had destined for a brief sea-side trip for Miss Belle Lacy and her deformed little sister Lois. Miss Belle had been so hard at work, so very glad to have the work all summer, and how it would rejoice Lois to see the autumn carpet of the salt marshes, and to watch the waves come tumbling in under the mellow Indian summer sunshine, or

> "Where silently
> Above the sea
> Hangs calm and bright the hunter's moon."

"However," thought Jean to herself, "I will not make John hate my new ways and interests by refusing him. I never did refuse him anything."

"Thanks," said John carelessly, as he pocketed the money. "That 's a good girl. Now I want you to do something else for me. You go and tell Dysart about my difficulty with Gray, and make it clear to him that it is no use to try to drive me as he is doing, or to send me to school. I like reading when I pick out my own books, and I like acting and reciting. I 'll do well enough if he just lets me take my own way. You make that clear to him and ask him to let me run myself. Eh, Jean?"

"I'll go tell him, and ask him not to be angry; but I can't advise Mr. Dysart what to do. He knows so much more than I do, and he is trying to do just what is right."

"Old Molly Coddle," said John angrily, "he and Aunt Prudence are of the same stripe. Wish I'd never seen either of them."

"May I tell him you'd like to go into some business or office to learn some kind of work, like other men?"

"No, you may n't; that's not my style," said this golden youth.

Jean departed on her unpleasant errand.

"What did he say?" demanded John on her return.

"He says you've behaved very badly; he's very sorry, and he means to take you at once to a military school. He says your trunk must be packed to-day."

"I knew you'd make a mess of it; it's all your fault," raged John.

"He said something about a schoolship too."

"A schoolship!" shouted John: "study nights, work all day like a sailor, and eat rubbishy rations! no sir!"

"He says he'll try that, if you get into trouble at the military school. O John, why could n't you study with Mr. Moultrie, or be good at Prof. Gray's?"

"Now, see here," said John, "if it comes to a fight between Dysart and me I 'm the one that 's going to win. Do you hear that?"

"Yes, but I do n't believe it, John; because it looks as if you were taking the way to ruin yourself;" so poor Jean flung herself on a couch and began to cry, and cried until she had to be put to bed with a headache. This galled John, for he felt to blame for it; he was further aggravated by entering his room and finding Mrs. Dall packing his trunk in obedience to a telephone message from Mr. Dysart. John's wrath had to be poured out on somebody, so he sought out his Aunt Prudence, who was in the little morning-room carefully going over her accounts.

"See here, aunt, I want to talk to you. You are now tearing down the Rents to rebuild them lavishly."

"Not tearing down," said Miss Cardiff; "those houses were put up in the days of thorough, well-inspected work; the walls, foundations, partitions, sills, most of the timbers are as good as ever. Like the paint on the house of Jane Carlyle's father, it was work to last for a century. We are putting in new floors, windows, drains, plumbing, ventilating-shafts, better chimneys, new doors, some closets—making things fit for decent living. The cellars are to be dry and finished, the attics finished, lighted and capable of being heated; there will be no dark, cold, damp dens in the renovated Cardiff Rents."

"All that costs a lot of money," said John morosely.

"I know it does," said his aunt cheerfully.

"Have you any right to use up our money, Jean's and mine, in that way? We are minors. You have over persuaded her; *I* protest with all my might."

"I am not using a penny of money belonging to either of you, John," said Miss Cardiff patiently. "Since my father's death the portion of income he left to me has been accumulating in bank. I could not use it because I felt that it was unlawfully earned, the Rents not being conducted in a method that I considered humane and Christian. That money, every penny of it my own, a reserve no one else can claim, is the money I am spending on the Rents. I am turning it back into the channels from which it came."

"Well," said John doggedly, "that may be so; but meantime while all this reconstructing is going on we are out of income from the Rents. I expect the rent paid to you by the people you have moved into the other houses does not amount to more than the rent you pay for the buildings."

"You are right," said Miss Prudence, "the rent and cost of moving and repairing, about all."

"Leaving us without income meanwhile," said John.

"Which seemed to me no hardship or injustice, as the income from other investments is sufficient to keep our family on its usual footing, and we have been receiving from twenty to seventy per cent. on the capital in the Rents. By Christmas the Rents will be finished and fully re-occupied, and lease money will be not only paid, but more punctually paid by better tenants, and the property will be better kept up."

"But not such good income out of it as before. You are going to the expense of keeping each hall lit by electricity; you don't intend to rent for lodging-rooms with several families in a room, or for boarders six or eight in a room?"

"Most assuredly I do not. Such places are hotbeds of disease and crime."

"What difference is that to us, if we don't catch the disease or share the crime."

"We do share the crime by fostering it in such fashion."

"And you don't mean to let out the basements for grog-shops or other such little affairs?" sneered John.

"No; I shall lease to families or individuals, but not to keepers of dens of vice."

"Well, you see, aunt, then you simply will be out of the very kind of renting that makes the most money for us," said John, suddenly developing considerable knowledge of slum landlordism. "Now you have a conscience against all this, but I have not, and a third of that property is mine, and my rights ought to be respected, even if my grandfather did make a crazy old will, giving you the administration of all during the time you survived my father. Father was a good many years older than you. Grandfather might have known you 'd have the handling of it to our detriment."

"Possibly he wanted to give the city an object-lesson in both methods of managing—the purely selfish and the Christian," suggested Miss Cardiff.

"It 's a wonder," said John, "that you do n't find it wicked to take any rent at all, and turn socialist, and divide up all that we have with those slummies, and let them riot on it as long as it lasts."

"That would not be at all in harmony with the teachings of my Bible, John. We must owe no man anything, must work quietly with our hands, eating our own bread. 'If any will not work neither let him eat.' All this is as good for our tenants as for us. The providence of God has given us property, and that property is tenement-houses; it seems to me that all that is required of us is to charge fair rents and give fair quarters, neither pauperizing people by giving them that for which they do not pay, nor wresting from their poverty exhorbitant rents for cruelly unhealthy and miserable quarters. The crying need of the time seems to be good homes for wage earners. Degraded surroundings make degraded people; filth, damp and darkness lower vitality, and weak vitality badly fed tends toward the development of vice. The workingman's home is built for him by others, and his home must be near his work; he cannot afford the luxury of a suburban dwelling, and it seems to me most cruel and entirely unchristian to take advantage of his situation to force him into the worst environment possible. To give him a good home where health, decency and privacy are obtainable is, I think, an act of patriotism and good citizenship; also of sound financial policy when the prosperity of the whole community is considered. I hoped, John, that you as a man would see and appreciate this."

This delicate little compliment to his stature and manhood did not mollify John. "And you 've planned another way of reducing income by lessening tenants," he said angrily; "Moultrie says you mean to reserve a first-floor corner room in each house for a kind of free reading-room, employment bureau, and so on."

"Yes, I do. I want the men to have a more helpful place to stay in than a grog-shop."

"Puts you out of the rent of a whole family."

"But gives me the advantage of better tenants who will be in work, will pay their rent, and not cut up my doors and floors for firewood. Tenants, property, perhaps even income, will appreciate together."

"What is there attractive in those wretches of the slums?"

"Nothing," said Miss Prudence promptly; "neither the slums nor their inhabitants are attractive. They have no morals, no skill, no beauty, no decency; the animals of any menagerie would no doubt be more pleasing and winning; but, John, it is within the range of the possibilities that in each or any one of these human waifs 'Christ may be formed the hope of glory;' manhood may be evoked by the Ithuriel spear of brotherly consideration."

"I wish that the homes had been insured for all they were worth and then burned down," cried John, "so we should not have had these vagaries of yours to contend with."

"The Insurance Societies would not take heavy risks on them, John; yet, owing to the overflow of drains and the leakage of pipes, they were too damp to burn."

"Your notions of what can be done down there, aunt, are all a woman's fancies. Men do n't entertain such schemes."

"If you had read more widely on this question, John, you would know that since 1861 three benevolent men of England have had a whole village of this sort, providing good homes, abundant work, education, fair wages, and short hours; insuring happiness, ambition, and a high order of excellence in the work. Weaving, stamping, dyeing, glass-work are done. Merton Abbey has reached the best work, the shortest hours, and the highest wages known. In England also a little town called Keswick is chiefly given up to proving that raising the physical and moral standard of the wage-worker raises the quality and value of his work. A gentleman and his wife have given themselves to this fine form of philanthropy, helping people to help themselves, and Keswick is a town full of healthy, happy, industrious people. Worth doing, eh, John?"

"Well," said John sulkily, "there 's no use talking to you, aunt; you 're bound to go on until you run everything into the ground."

"John, you are fond of poetry. Listen to this:

"'Say not, "It matters not to me,
My brother's weal is *his* behoof;"
For in this wondrous human web
If his life 's warp, your life is woof.

"'Woven together are the threads,
And you and he are in one loom;
For good or ill, for glad or sad,
Your lives must share a common doom.'"

"I don't know but I 'm glad," said John, "to go to military school or anywhere else that will get me away from this rubbish."

John having departed, rebellious and in a vile humor, Jean felt miserable enough, and for two or three days could rouse herself to interest in nothing. Then Mrs. Jennings happened to remark that Belle Lacy, who was sewing for her, had said that Lois was half sick; that Lois' twelfth birthday had come and was not likely to be a very cheerful one."

"I might as well try and make some one else happy if I am miserable myself," said Jean; so she sought the quiet little home of the Johnsons where the Lacys boarded. She went first to the old playroom in the third story of her own home, where she and John had spent so many hours of childhood. It had long been locked up, and was stored with the multitudinous toys of wealthy and indulged children. Jean selected a book and a dissected map for Lois, then, having paid her a little visit, gave her ten dollars—borrowed from Aunt Prudence—telling her that she and Belle must take a four days' trip to the seaside, and giving her the address of a quiet little home where they could find board. "Be sure that you persuade Belle to go; she needs the change badly, Lois, but you need not tell her so. The money is your birthday present, and I want her to take you on this little trip."

"Oh, we'll go!" cried Lois with all a child's eagerness. "I never had a trip in my life, Miss Cardiff, and I never was out of the city but twice, then only to the end of the street railroad with a little teenty-weenty walk beyond."

"What, really?" said Jean. "How queer that seems! Well, you must go now, Lois. You can sit on the sands and see the great white horses rush in from the sea." Leaving Lois, Jean went for Mrs. Jennings; then they drove down to see the kindergarten and the milk dépôt; after which Jean wanted to go to the New Rents to see how 'Mandy Ann was working on men's overalls. She had no machine; another woman in the house had made the great venture of buying a machine on the installment plan; she did the seaming and 'Mandy Ann did the putting on of buckles and buttons and making the button-holes. With 'Mandy Ann sat Mistress Gess, putting large and influential patches on the garments of her numerous progeny. Jean had never before seen stockings mended by a big patch of rag, and she regarded the operation with some curiosity. Mistress Gess supposed that the young lady was admiring her work, so she kept it elaborately in view.

"You were talking when I came in," said Jean; "go on, I want to hear you."

"Why, Miss, we was only saying as Miss Fenn was as like as not to lose all she ever pays out on her machine; an' buyin' it weekly as she do, the price comes to her half as high ag'in as machines sold out and out, for I 've seen 'em in the winders marked."

"I suppose it is a dear way of buying; but how will she lose?"

"The poor women allus do, an' the way lots of these agent fellers make big profits. There 'll come a week, or mebby two, when, do her best, Mis' Fenn can't pay; so in comes the men an' carries off the machine, and all she 's paid goes for nothin'. Why, I 've knowed an agent join in with the man that give out the work, an' got him to cut off work from a poor woman, just so she *could n't* keep up her pay, the very last month, and he swep' off the machine, an' she jes' died of discouragement. The nurse up to the Maternity said it was just clear discouragement killed her, when she could n't see no way to keep her an' the little baby."

"Yes, an' I knowed a woman, Miss, so hard put to it to keep her payments up, she starved herself so she jest give out all over at onct, and fell over dead ag'inst the machine she was tryin' to keep her children on."

Jean turned pale with horror at these reminiscences.

"So you see, Miss Cardiff, Mis' Fenn stands a big chance of getting into trouble with this machine. If her son gets out of work she 's sure to lose her machine, even if she works fourteen hours a day, seven days in the week. Eight an' ten cents a pair is all she gets for overalls; an' 'Mandy Ann, she has to have three an' four cents for the finishin'; the finishin' takes half the time."

"But there are not seven working days in the week," said Jean, surprised at Mistress Gess' count, "only six."

"Mercy, Miss!" cried Mistress Gess, "you do n't expect women like Mis' Fenn to stop work Sunday, do you?"

"But the Lord gave the Sabbath to us all."

"What for, Miss?"

"Rest."

"Rest! Why, ai n't you innocent! If the

Lord *did* ever give us poor women Sunday, man has clean taken it away from us."

"What for?'

"For work, sure, Miss. Wages is ground down so that if we do n't work seven days we can't get food enough to stand up to our work the other six. Rest Sunday! That would be a new story, if there was work to be had. Most of men's work stops then, but women's kind do n't. Why, Miss, I wash; an' as sure as my name 's Jerushy Gess I has more washin' to do Sunday than any other day; the men, some of 'em, has no change of clothes, an' being their work 's shut down on Sunday, they gives me their clothes an' stays in bed, an' I washes an' irons 'em; that is, for them men that is decent enough to want their things washed at all. I try to get 'em real dry too, ever since one man nigh died of putting 'em on damp. But it 's a terrible trouble. Since Gess got converted sitting out there on the curbstone—on the curbstone, mind you—he asked me not to wash on Sunday. Sez I, 'Why, Gess, ai n't it religious for folks to be at least sort of half-way clean?' Gess 'lowed it was. 'Them men,' sez I, 'as h' ai n't but one set o' clothes will have to go powerful dirty if I *do n't* wash for 'em Sundays. Ai n't it religious,' sez I, 'to keep your promises?' Gess 'lowed it was, 'cause since he sot on the curbstone that time he overhauls the Bible Mr. Moultrie giv' him. Sez I to Gess, 'Well, I *promised* that washin', an' my word I hev to keep. I ort to do something that 's religious,' I sez."

Jean looked puzzled, Mistress Gess was not in religion much of a help-meet for her newly converted husband. 'Mandy Ann here interposed. "Miss, if God gave us Sunday, man takes it away from us, for the way livin' costs an' wages goes, it 's work or starve. But in the country Sunday was perfectly lovely, seemed just like the real love of God."

> "Yes, child of suffering, thou may's't well be sure
> He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor."

said Jean softly.

"Here 's Mr. Hapgood, he 's well learned, an' he never keeps Sunday; he works all the time," said Mrs. Gess.

"'My poverty, but not my will consents,'" quoted Rufus.

"Miss, your coupé is waitin below here, it can't get nigher the door; there 's a load of brick broke down."

"Mrs. Jennings," said Jean, as they drove homewards, "Gray says 'the short and simple annals of the poor'; he may mean the country or village poor, but the lives of the city poor are full of terrible tragedies."

CHAPTER VIII.

WATER FROM AN EMPTY WELL.

"Youth dreams a bliss on this side death.
It dreams a rest, if not more deep
More grateful than that marble sleep."

NOT with the silent majesty of Solomon's ascending temple, but with noise and tumult, dust and debris the work of repairing the old Cardiff Rents went on. It was to be done by Christmas, so that the tenants could move back before the holiday. The Rents were likely to be well filled, there were numerous applications for rooms. Jean had interested a number of her young friends, and with Jean and the others there was much looking over of cast-off playthings and books, so that every family where there were children in the Rents, could have such Christmas pleasure as tops make; and Jean had set aside some of her pocket money to buy a plant or some greenery for every room, and had made a notable bargain with a down-town baker to deliver a loaf and a pie at every room on Christmas morning. Mr. Moultric was drilling all the children of the neighborhood in singing Christmas hymns, and there was to be a grand 'sing' all through and around the Rents on Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning. The Kindergarten was to have a Christmas tree donated by the Sunday-school of the church to which Jean and Aunt Prudence belonged, and Mrs. Jennings and her friends arranged to give each mother that came for milk to Mrs. Lindsay on Christmas a bag of doughnuts and a quarter of a pound of tea.

What delightful doings there were to be sure! Jean was very happy, and could scarcely wait for Christmas to come.

"As John's school has no Christmas holiday we will send him the best letters and box that ever were seen," said Jean to Aunt Prudence.

However people reckoned without their host when reckoning about John; two or three days before Christmas the heir of the Cardiff, with his trunk, arrived at home, calmly announcing expulsion. Jean's heart was fairly broken; her John, her dear John, seemed bound to do the very worst possible for himself. What to Jean was the singing and laughter of the easily pleased children down by the Rents, if her twin brother was as Ephraim who destroyed himself? Of course Jean must carry out her programme and not load "her people," with disappointment; but all the heart and sweetness was gone out of the affair. John felt some remorse when he saw his sister's pretty mouth droop sadly at the corners, and noted the pallor and the dark circles under her eyes, that told of wakeful nights. He offered to drive down to the kindergarten and help her trim the Christmas Tree. Not a great hardship when he knew that some of their young friends would be on hand to share the work. Jean gladly accepted his escort, and John bought ten pounds of stick and nut candy, which he tossed out to what he called the "Slummers," with a liberal hand.

"Why not hand it to them," said Jean, "it gets soiled falling on the pavement."

"Let 'em rub it off; they 're used to dirt," said John. "I like to see them scramble for it."

He tossed Rufus Hapgood a half dollar and bade him "give a dinner to some lad who could n't pay for it."

Rufus eyed the donor as he pocketed the donation. John was as tall as Jean, but he was less well set up, his shoulders drooped a trifle, his face was thinner, there were little hollows in his cheeks, and his eyes were sunken; his complexion lacked the flush of health in its dark brown, his hands were long and nervous, his whole air listless, lacking in muscular strength and alertness. Not a lad of whom one would predicate long life or great usefulness.

> " The earth hath bubbles, as the water hath,
> And thou art of them,"

quoted Rufus Hapgood to himself, looking at John covertly, with no favor.

Mr. Dysart's opinion was higher than that of Rufus Hapgood. "That boy ought to be a power for good," he said to Miss Prudence; "he has a prodigious memory, and great quickness of intellect; his faults are the result of the unlimited indulgence and shameful neglect of his bringing up. How true of many men is that scripture, 'He heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them.' Men like your brother devote themselves to money-making, and allow their heirs to become idlers and weaklings, to waste their inheritance in a very few years, unless they die before their prime."

True to his threat the troubled guardian marched John off as a candidate for a place on a School-ship, but to John's great delight, he was cast in the severe physical examination: "Not stamina enough. Throat in bad order.

John went home triumphant. Mr. Dysart sat down to give his pupil a good lecture. "John," he said, "I wont say you are going to the dogs, but it does look to me as if your methods are taking you at a swift rate toward that vault up in the cemetery whereof you have the key."

"Pooh," said John. "I'll live to see fourscore."

"Unless you change your ways, my lad, you'll live to very little purpose. Cannot I rouse some ambition in you? Choose out for yourself some worthy line of life, and follow it to success. 'The world is all before you where to choose.' The future stands fronting you, saying, 'Rise, oh youth, and wrestle with me.' Show yourself an athlete in the struggle for the survival of the fittest."

"I don't see anything to struggle for, sir. Aunt Prudence is bound to wreck everything there is, the pace she's going."

"I tell you, John, not one dime of your fortune will be impaired."

"In that case," said John, "there's still nothing for me to struggle for; I have enough and to spare."

"You are capable of devastating your own future and Jean's too."

"If I did that, Aunt Prudence would have to share with Jean; and serve her right," said the young incorrigible.

"That's all waywardness, boy, pure waywardness," said Mr. Dysart. "I know there are lads who can bear the curse of wealth, they are made of pretty good stuff. The few golden heirs I've had to do with have gone to destruction.

If I had a son and a fortune, I 'd educate the son to do well in some business or profession, and give the fortune away; my son's dower should be the prayers of the poor."

"I think mine is the curse of the poor, from what I 've heard of some remarks on a certain occasion by Sime Ridder!"

"You force me to thank God that I have no son; and as for the fortune, I have never lamented its practical lack."

"I 'm sorry you all take me to heart," said John lightly, "but I 'm very well suited with myself, and if I did wish to be different I should n't know where to begin."

"Begin with your soul. There is no strength in unbelief," said Mr. Dysart.

John whistled and looked for a cigarette. None of this talk made any impression upon him; he had made up his mind to manage affairs to suit himself, but somehow he was not finding much enjoyment in it. He read distinct disapproval in the faces of old familiar family friends; those of his young comrades who were really worth companying with were not taking his road and stood aloof from him; while the others, who sought his society and eagerly helped him to spend his money, were those of whose acquaintance John felt a secret shame. He found time hanging heavily on his hands;

there was no savor in the tricks and capers that once had been so delightsome.

His very quarrel with the philanthropic occupations of Jean and Aunt Prudence drew John often to the neighborhood of Cardiff Rents to seek some fresh occasion for fault-finding. At such times, as Rufus Hapgood was the only really bright talker, John usually tarried for a time chatting by the coffee-stand. Rufus instinctively felt that Jean was mourning over her wayward brother, and while heartily disliking the supercilious lad on his own account, he yet wished him well for his sister's sake. John reminded Rufus of his own early days, the "confusions of his wasted youth;" so Rufus looked curiously at the lad who was taking that fatal road his own feet had so disastrously trodden. "Only he 's going it at a far more rapid pace than I did, and has more money. Lack of cash brought me up by a short turn before I had ruined my constitution; but here the cash will outlast vitality, or I 'm mistaken." As Rufus summed up John's affairs in this fashion John lounged along flipping a rattan cane, and sometimes hitting therewith stray cats, dogs or children. All these followed Jean "like a Highland chief's tail" when she appeared in the neighborhood; they scuttled out of John's way and gave him the entire walk.

"Still entertaining the public, Hapgood?" said John loftily.

"Yes. 'The world's an inn, and death's the journey's end,' as Dryden remarks; but there are inns and inns; some folks find their inn like the Continental or the St. Nicholas; but other folks find theirs no bigger than my coffee-stall, with leave to sleep under the counter and be kicked out come daylight. It is, in my view, according as we make it in our youth that we take it in our age. I did n't think, when I fooled away my time and myself in my youth, that it was going to 'steep me in poverty to the very lips.'" Thus Rufus Hapgood, ex-collegian.

"We most of us find a way of getting rid of ourselves and our goods," said John, "and why not take the way that has the most fun in it for ourselves? My father used to say that he had observed that there'd be two or three generations of makers and savers; then two or three of idlers and wasters. Seems to be so in our family: my father, grandfather and great-grandfather kept their noses to the grindstone most of their time; for my part I like to make my money spin; but the way my aunt is carrying on with her cash makes it go faster than mine; and who's getting any fun out of it?"

"Fun?" queried Rufus, "I used to talk of fun when I was a 'raw and callow youth;' I've seen the world's black and sober side too thoroughly since to have any place in my mind for talk about fun. I can tell you there are plenty of people getting life, good health, clean decent living, large hope and comfort out of the way your ladies are using their money. Hundreds of 'gutter-snipes' and 'wharf-rats,' brute names that were given to human children because they were so like brutes, are now likely to grow up to be decent men and good citizens instead of paupers and criminals; while dozens of neglected wretched little girls are going to be decent happy women, not inmates of almshouses and hospitals—mothers of criminals; all that good is coming out of your ladies' way of using their money."

"But what good will all that do us when our money is all gone? tell me that," said John querulously.

"The money will not be gone. This is a sound investment; already this neighborhood is so improved, and the Rents are so improved, that the property is worth many thousands more than it was a year ago, to say nothing of the people living here being worth more."

"The people? They are better because better homes bid for a new class of tenants; really the ones that lived here before have been swept out into slums a little farther off; I don't believe the *people* are any better," said John.

"But they are, sir: mostly they 're the same ones that was here before; but clean air, more daylight, plenty of water, a chance to better themselves, a bit of hope, the encouragement of a friend or two, just a few gifts, and the finding of work—it has made them over. Say, sir, did you ever come down here in the old times of the Cardiff Rents?"

"You 'd better believe I did not," laughed John.

"You *dared* not. Life, health, your purse, your bones were not safe down here then; you know they are fairly safe now. See here, sir. This ward, owing to the Cardiff Rents, was one of the wards where there were six hundred people to the acre! Call that sanitary or decent? Over a hundred rooms in this ward had five or more people in each. Call that proper, to stow people in that way, folks made in God's image, stow 'em like pigs in a pen? I tell you, sir, I 've been thinking of late. Talking with Mr. Moultrie and some others he has brought down here, is widening out my mind some, as it used to be widened days when I was studying, and thinking to be somebody. What was the consequence of that cramming? Forty deaths to a thousand—fifty or sixty to a thousand sometimes—the coroner's wagon, and the dead pauper's wagon were rattlin' in an' out here at a great rate, no one noticing.

'Rattle his bones
Over the stones,
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns.'

How that line of Hood's used to keep humming through my mind as I looked on, and reckoned to be carried out by said wagon myself. Look up, sir, along the length of the street. It's narrow, but you can see God's blue sky, and the sun shines in on it. Used to be that ropes and wires of foul clothes dangled across the street from window to window, until you could not see sky at all. More than that, landlords, to grab and grind their rents out of the swarms of poor, used to build little rookeries, leaning against the big ones—cart-sheds and horse-stalls they called them, and eating-places—pooh, they were places rented for tenants; they had no floors nor foundations; there they just clung, like rotting fungus to the sides of the other places, narrowing the streets and closing up windows. They're done away with. Your aunt made complaints, threatened suits, brought suit two or three times, until the city scraped those fever holes off the streets of this ward. Ever been inside some of these blocks? Gone under an arch like that one yonder, to see the middle of a block?"

"No," said John with a shudder.

"You just ought to try it! Houses in there piled up five or six stories high. Places were back yards or stable yards once, when these wards were lived in by well-to-do's, and there were carriages kept, trees on the walks, good pavements. Those houses in the middle of the blocks, back and front—if they can be said to have any back or front—stand close upon the outside houses; they get no light to speak of, their chimneys wont draw, the air they have is the vile stench that rolls out of the rooms of the tenements about them. Rare fever-breeders those inside houses!"

"Bad enough, very likely, but why should we be the ones to make a break?" said John. "There were other property owners, and there was the city. Why should we bear the whole burden?"

"There always must be a first reformer," said Rufus, "and some one to make a start. I think the Bible explains it in the verse 'a band of men whose hearts God had touched.'"

"But see here, Hapgood, you 'll agree with me, that this is not work for women, but for men. Women really do not know how to use money. They are naturally extravagant."

Rufus glanced at John's elegant costume, the diamond studs in his shirt, big diamond ring on his hand, the gold top to his little cane, and smiled covertly, as he thought of Miss Cardiff and Jean in their well-fitted black garments. John went on:

"Women undertaking this building work, this work of philanthropy they 're so fond of talking about, go to such extremes. They want to put beggars in palaces—nothing is too good for their dear slummies."

"You can't cast that up against Miss Cardiff. Seems to me her plans have been as simple as may be. Is it too much to ask that rooms in which folks live should have ceilings not less than eight and a half feet high? I 've seen houses where a floor of rooms fourteen and a half feet to ceiling, as the old nabobs had it when they lived in 'em, had a floor run across them, and turned out two stories of rooms less than seven feet to ceiling! Those Cardiff Rents were fixed to crowd four families on every floor twenty-five feet wide. It is not very lavish, is it, to say that rooms rented for folks to live in must be at least twelve by twelve flooring room, eh? 'Bout as big as your dressing-room that, eh?"

An elderly man who had been taking a cup of coffee and a roll now spoke up. "Young sir, this lady you criticize has only done what so wise a body as the Council of the City of London has done; and in fact she has not come nearly up to the line they thought fair. It would surely make your hair stand on end if she undertook improvements equal to them. I'm English; I just came from London last week. Let me tell you how the City Council there are making over a slum. First, as did the lady you are speaking of here, they hired and repaired houses into which the tenants of the houses that were to be rebuilt were moved. The new houses occupy only half, or a little over half, the space of the old ones, and the ground so saved is put into making streets sixty feet wide, and a round public garden nearly three hundred feet in diameter — a breathing-place for the slums, you see. The wide streets have trees planted on each side; the garden has trees, seats, and a band-stand in the center."

"All that wasted on the slums!" cried the artless John.

"The houses, young sir, are not allowed to be carried up so high as here, only four stories; every building is to have, before or behind it, an open space equal to its height; and no building is to be over two rooms deep. If such rules were laid down by your common council the city would be revolutionized."

"The property-owners would raise a revolu-

ICE COLD MILK 3d
HOT COFFEE ½d A CUP.
Richd W. Rummell

tion first," said John. "Not one of them would waste his fortune on such orders."

"In the case I speak of, the city has bought the property at its appraised value, and made all alterations at its own cost."

"The city is likely to bankrupt itself on such doings."

"The plan is that money invested in these changes must bring annual profit of three per cent., and repay the entire outlay, including purchase, in fifty years."

"Probably the city won't light the halls, as my aunt does," said John; who burnt lights lavishly himself, and of all things hated a dark room.

"The buildings I speak of must have halls lit all the twenty-four hours; also the halls and stairways must have horizontal ventilation to the open air."

"There are more fools in the world than I thought," said John, strolling away.

"That lad is taking a short cut to death, I fear," said the Englishman, looking after him.

Rufus nodded, then inspected the travelling-cap, tweed suit, and leather gaiters of the Englishman. "I don't quite make you out," he said; "folks of your conversation and build don't usually eat at my stall or haunt these quarters."

"I 'm writing some works on social economy and the labor problem, and I came here to investigate. I have looked up England, France, Italy, and Germany, pretty well. New as this country is, some of its slums equal or outvie those of the older countries."

John had strolled out of sight, he scarcely knew what to do, or where to go. Nothing pleased him, nothing satisfied him. He was drawing water from an empty well, and wondered that he had nothing to slake his thirst.

John was out late at night, out all night often. No one knew this but Jean. Once or twice, anxious because of his miserable looks, she had gone to his room at night to see if he were wakeful or suffering, and had found that his room was empty, his bed undisturbed. After saying that he was tired, he had gone up stairs early and had gone out of the house by a rear door, trusting to his latch-key to let him in. John had set up the fatal latch-key before he was twelve.

When Jean found that her brother was out of the house, she could not rest. Long hours, sometimes whole nights, she sat by the window watching and listening for her brother's return, other nights she lay down and fell into fitful slumbers. What terrors she endured, fearing to see John brought home intoxicated, injured, dead. Once or twice she had seen him coming up the street, his steps swaying and uncertain, and she had crept down to let him in, help him to his room, help him to bed. These vigils and anxieties were telling on Jean. She had lost flesh, her eyes were heavy, she started if any-one came in or spoke suddenly; Aunt Prudence began to be much disturbed about her niece. Constant disappointments wore upon Jean. Days when John felt weak and racked with headache, his sister would sit by him all day trying to comfort or entertain him. Sometimes John would be touched by this devotion, and promise to be good and go at some useful business. But he always broke these promises, which for a few hours had buoyed up Jean's heart. Jean invited young friends to the house, she had music and refreshments in the evening, asked John to take her to concerts or other entertainments—all was useless, for these pleasures palled on John's destroyed moral palate.

Aunt Prudence appealed about Jean to Dr. Imlay.

"What are you breaking your heart over?" asked the doctor.

"John!" cried Jean, with a sudden rain of tears.

"How old are you twins now?"

"Sixteen, last November."

"And it is now March. Come to-morrow, have John bring you."

The next day Dr. Imlay took the twins to his inner office; he prescribed various tonics for Jean, and then bade her to go to the parlor while he talked to John. It was a long conference. John came out pale and panting.

"Jean," he said, when they entered the coupé, "if you and Aunt Prudence do any more talking about me to Dr. Imlay, I 'll leave home and never come back. He need n't think he can scare me, to please two silly women."

"Oh, John, we did not talk to him about you!" cried Jean. "And if the doctor has said anything, you should heed it."

"I can manage myself," said John arrogantly.

Could he? One day in late May John fell senseless from his seat at the dinner-table. His aunt, as she helped to undress him, was appalled to see what a bloodless skeleton he had become. In an hour three doctors were in attendance on the spoiled heir of the Cardiffs.

CHAPTER IX.

ALONE ON A WIDE, WIDE SEA.

> "What exile from himself can flee
> To zones though more and more remote."

Dr. Imlay came into the library where Jean and her aunt waited for the verdict of the physicians. The last year or nearly a year of divided interests and continuous carpings on John's part had in no wise weakened Jean's passionate love for her brother; perhaps her fondness had increased because his unrest and his failing health had intensified that maternal element which is a part of all women's loving.

Aunt Prudence was fond of her nephew; he much resembled a little brother, the darling of her young days, who had died when he was ten years old. John also was her father's namesake, the last upholder of her family name. She had held to the belief that a subtle change would pass over him, and that in a grand new life he would be co-worker and helper for her and for his sister. Could she now give up this dream?

"What is the matter with my John, Dr. Imlay?" cried Jean.

"He seems to have completely wrecked his constitution. When boys, not seventeen, ape the vices of ruffians of forty, they take a pace that is likely to carry them off quickly. Since when has John slept all night quietly in his own bed? How many cigarettes does he smoke in a day? How much wine does he drink? What days are there when he is not wrought up to a fever heat by gambling? 'Ephraim, thou hast destroyed theyself.'"

"And is there no hope for John?" demanded his aunt.

"I do not want to afford you false hopes. John, we all feel, has not more than two chances in a hundred for recovery—perhaps only one. He is very young, and youth usually affords us ground of hope, but in this case it increases the danger."

"No remedy for John in all the resources of modern medicine. Oh, doctor, can you think of nothing?"

"We are decided that there is but one course that offers any possible hope. That is a course you will think most painful, while the likelihood of a good result is exceedingly small."

"But what is it?" demanded Jean. "Try anything, doctor, do anything; only save John."

"Let me tell you, that if John stays here the very best treatment we can give him will not prolong his life three months; in fact, I think six weeks would be the longest time he could live."

"Then let us take him away. Where shall we go? South, North—to Europe! We will both give up everything and go with him," said Aunt Prudence.

"It would result in no benefit, I assure you. The one course that has ever effected a cure in the cases—happily very few—such as John's that have come under our observation, this one course has been to put the patient under the care of a good captain, on a sailing vessel, and send him off on a voyage of many months. Understand, this is heroic treatment, but it is the only treatment that has a hope in it. No nurse no relative, no coddling, no dainty stores—simply plenty of strong all-wool clothes, and putting him into the care of a judicious man—a captain who will have full control, regulate his duties by his health, never let him go ashore, and will as soon as possible put him into the rank, work, and maintainance, of an ordinary hand before the mast."

"Oh, doctor, how could poor John stand that?"

"If John gets where he can stand that," replied the doctor grimly, "John will get where he may hope to return home, and attain to his majority."

"Would John understand the need of such a course?"

"Our only hope is in making him see the necessity, and accept the treatment. If he will not consent to it, it is hopeless to try it; his resistance and opposition would complete his ruin and destroy the very small possibility of cure this plan affords us."

"We certainly shall not antagonize any of your plans," said Miss Prudence; "what ever you decide, we will try to carry out."

"Our proposition is simply this: we shall use every means to secure some favorable reaction in John's system and build him up so far that we can safely make him understand his imminent danger. and the sole remedy we have to propose. If John accepts our diagnosis, and heartily unites with us in our efforts for his restoration, Mr. Dysart and I must search for a suitable ship captain to take charge of him at once. I should hope to get him off within two weeks."

"Would he be strong enough to go so soon?"

"We should not wait for him to be strong enough; he would be carried on board, and given a part of the captain's cabin; and as he regained strength—if he ever did—he could be dealt with accordingly. Understand, if he does go off in this way, there is very little hope that you will ever see him again. I have sent for a trained hospital nurse, and we want the boy kept quiet; you had better not go near him for the present."

"Is there any hope of finding such a ship and captain?"

"Dr. Long had a patient who was treated in this way, and recovered physically and morally; he was sent on the ship Coral Queen, Captain Locke, on a voyage round the world. The result was most happy in that case, it may be in this; God grant it. Captain Locke is an elderly, kindly, Christian man, an experienced sailor, a good disciplinarian; a man who puts his religion into his daily actions, and does his duty faithfully. There is possibility that the Coral Queen is now in port, loading up for a voyage through the Straits of Magellan, so to China, then southward through the China Sea, across the Indian Ocean, round the Cape of Good Hope, and thence back by the Cape Verde Islands and the Azores. From a year to a year and a half the voyage will require. You could hear of John's wellfare, if he does fare well — from numerous ports where the Coral Queen will touch. I should ask Captain Locke to give us full news as frequently as he can."

"Doctor," said Jean, who found it impossible to understand her brother's exhausted condition and instant danger, when in her own veins life flowed in so strong a tide, "I do believe John would really enjoy a trip like that!"

"There will be very little in it for a lad like John to enjoy," said the doctor shortly; "if he lives and gains in strength, just in proportion as he gains he will be put into the work, quarters, rations, of a common sailor. John wont fancy being flung neck and crop into such an ice-bath of events and circumstances as that; but it is his only hope. In fact John is likely to come home a man, or not come home at all."

"What shall we do to make him ready for the voyage?" asked Miss Prudence, hoping that Jean would have some work for her brother, to soften the sorrows and fears of this parting. Dr. Imlay, however, had his eyes solely on the good of this patient almost *in extremis;* he replied briefly, "You can do nothing. I will make out a list under Captain Locke's directions—if we find Captain Locke—and he will take charge of John. Mr. Dysart will purchase and pack the things. All you can give John is a Bible and your prayers. He needs them if ever a boy did."

Dr. Imlay went away leaving the two women to regard each other in silence. Aunt Prudence understood, as Jean did not, the very small hope for John's life. If he survived to be carried on board the Coral Queen, how very likely he was to be buried in those cold, tossing Atlantic waves! Jean was too stunned for tears. She had seen how John was fading away; she had realized the fears for him of doctor, guardian, and aunt; she had known better than the rest, of the nights of riot when John did not get home until the stars were paling, and of the almost helplessly drunken state in which he so often came. Yet he seemed so young to die, so young to wreck himself utterly, she had felt sure that the happy hour of reformation must strike for him. Had she done all for him that she could? Had she left and neglected him for these new interests and duties that had so engrossed her? She interrogated herself sharply, but could not find where she had done for her brother less than the most that she could possibly do. It was the old wail, "How often I would — and ye would not." Miss Prudence looked anxiously at her niece; the girl was early entering the *via crucis*.

Suddenly Jean turned to her: "Aunt, I suppose my mother had a Bible? She *must* have had one of her own, you know; not a great heavy one, but a Bible such as you have."

There are in this Christian land, in this most Christian nineteenth century, most elegant and refined heathen, who know no more of the

Scriptures than devotees of Buddha in the heart of Asia. Had Jean's mother had a Bible? Her daughter did not know. Miss Prudence did not know. She could only start, and say—"Oh—yes—I hope so. Where can it be?"

"Because," pursued Jean, "that is the Bible John ought to have. I must find it and give it to him, as if our mother had reached her hand out of her grave and given her Bible to her son, to help him to do right. I must find that Bible. Up in the attic there are two trunks, full of my mother's things. They were packed after she died, and father once told me they were there for me."

"I know," said Miss Prudence, "nothing was packed up while I was here, because of the need of fumigating, disinfecting, airing everything, on account of the fever. Your father, or the housekeeper, must have packed those trunks."

"The keys are in my bureau," said Jean; "father gave them to me when I was fifteen. I am going up to look them over now."

"Had you not better rest? We have been awake all night nearly, while the doctors were working over our poor boy. Now that he is a little safer, you too should rest."

"Yes, after a while, when I am so tired out that I cannot stop to think any, then I can rest," said Jean pitifully.

She took the keys of her mother's trunks and went up to the attic. The spring sunshine fell bright and warm through the dormer windows; one ray lay across a small old-fashioned round table. Jean remembered a time when she and John were little and had come up into this attic for a romp. On this round table then lay a large book with gilt corners and clasps; John had pushed Jean against this table, and the heavy book, dust-covered, had fallen upon her as the tall slight stand went over; Jean's head was hurt, and she had screamed loudly. The nurse arrived, full of reproaches: "Such children; hurting yourselves, getting all dust, upsetting things, spoiling your grandmother's Bible!" That was the only time "grandmother's Bible" had appeared in Jean's life, until she had seen it, on that very stand, at the foot of her father's coffin. Aunt Prudence had placed it there. Jean, owing to her troubled sight, had taken possession of the Bible, when it became to her a book of price, to be read and lived by. The table she had sent back to the attic. She thought now that she would place them both in Aunt Prudence's room, and ask her aunt to use the grandmother's book at their daily reading.

Slowly then Jean knelt by the trunks and unlocked them. She had never opened them before; there had seemed to her something pathetic and sacred about the relics of her mother, who had gone away from the earth while her twin babies were too young to remember her. There were shawls of price in the trunks, boxes of jewels, costly fans, ball-dresses, dinner-gowns, opera cloaks, laces—Jean moved the rich fabrics and expensive trifles with a certain tender care. Young, beautiful, happy mother, who had gone away so soon! How much had she known of life's cares and sorrows? Had she ever heard that cry of the ragged, outcast, hungry poor? Jean had now some passages of Scripture fixed in her mind from her aunt's frequent readings to her; the cry of the poor reminded her of Esau's exceeding great and bitter cry, "Bless me, me also, O my father! for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and behold now he hath taken away my blessing. Hast thou not reserved one blessing for me!"

The thing we are the most eager for is usually the last found; Jean had gone almost to the bottom of the second trunk, before she found what she sought; at last, there it lay, folded in a kerchief, her mother's Bible, bound in red velvet, with clasps and corners of gold, print clear and good; on the fly-leaf, "By this live," and an "H." Who was "H"? Some friend who had had at heart that young mother's good. Jean sat upon the attic floor, the sunshine falling about her, and eagerly turned the pages. How much had her mother read that Bible? As she turned the leaves a dry sprig of geranium fell out, and next she came upon a faded blue violet; then, in two or three places were passages marked; no doubt her mother had found this gaudy world unsatisfactory, and turned toward heaven: at least her daughter felt sure of that.

Jean's dark, beautiful, sorrow-bowed head bent over the pages that her mother's hands had turned. "Oh, God," she prayed, "have pity on my poor John; cure him body and soul. Bless this book to him. Hear me, dear God! I cannot give my poor boy up to ruin. Jesus, Saviour, be good to him." Then a thought came into her mind of how two sisters, Martha and Mary cried out for a brother who had lain in his grave four days, and Christ had given him back. That comforted her. She restored to the trunks everything but the Bible and an emerald ring, and with these she went down stairs. She felt so faint and weary; she wished she could read a little in that Bible, but she was pledged not to use her eyes in reading. She listened at the closed door of John's room, then, awed by the deep silence within, she went to her own room, and leaving the door ajar that she might hear the first sound whether of good or evil omen, she lay down on her bed with her mother's book clasped to her bosom. So she fell asleep. Noon came and passed, and the splendors of the sunset flamed across the city before Jean woke. Aunt Prudence stood near her.

"John is awake," she said; "he is a little stronger. He asked Dr. Imlay if he had any chance for his life, and the doctor said, 'There is one we hope, if you will take it and God blesses it.' Then John whispered, 'Whatever it is I will take it—only do n't let me die.' Dr. Imlay said, 'Keep calm; trust in God's help and we will try to pull you through.'" So the boy had fallen back into semi-torpor again.

There were other such days; the Rents were forsaken of their helpers, except for Mr. Moultrie and Mrs. Jennings; they reported how the people there asked daily for "the ladies" and "that poor young man," and prayed that God might help them. John, lying at the end of hope, with as little vigor as a new-born babe, and far less prospect of living than most babes, was "the poor young man" to the ragged, hungry folk of the Rents.

Dr. Imlay and Mr. Dysart found the Coral Queen and Captain Locke; a plain sea-chest had been purchased and filled with a seaman's outfit for a round-the-world voyage. John had been frankly told upon what forlorn hope his life depended, and was eager to be carried aboard the ship. The day came. Jean sat by John's bed holding his hands; she was trying to be brave and calm; time enough to cry her heart out when the lad was gone and could not be harmed by it. From John's wasted fingers the rings he had been so fond of, slipped easily. Jean drew them off; then she put upon the little finger of his left hand, a ring with a single large emerald in it. "That was our mother's, John," she said. "I took it from her trunk for you. And here is our mother's Bible: that is for you, her only boy; and I do want you to keep it and read it, John; do, for mother's sake, for my sake, for your own sake! John, dear John, be good, and do your very best to get well and come back to me, for I shall never be happy until I see you again, see you a strong, good man, John." John's eyes were full of tears, answering the big tears that welled under Jean's lids; she bent forward to kiss him. John quickly turned his face away, but pressed his sister's dark head down upon his breast, and smoothed it with his feeble hand right lovingly.

The hour came and passed. On a stretcher the heir of the Cardiffs, a wreck not seventeen years old, was carried down the stairs of his home, placed in a hospital ambulance, and so taken to the Coral Queen. Jean and Aunt Prudence had bidden him "good-by" with what cheer they could while he still lay in his bed. He was gone, and the two cried in each other's arms—"for women must weep"—and the larger part of their weeping is done because of men's sins. The home seemed empty and lonely; the going out of the lad had left a larger vacancy than when the master of it had gone out for ever. This ruin of John seemed such a needless waste, such a contravening of nature. "Ephraim had fed on ashes; a deceived heart had turned him aside."

The fair May day had drifted to its close, the electric lights flamed across and around the city as if crowning and girdling it with splendid jewels; the warm evening air came into the open windows in long puffs, and the lace curtains filled and billowed and floated out into the gloom of the parlors, making Jean think of the full sails of a ship hurrying through the night. Jean and Miss Prudence sat each at a window waiting. Mr. Dysart had promised to return before he slept to tell them how John had begun his voyage. Mr. Dysart and Dr. Imlay had not only accompanied John aboard to settle him in his ocean home, but had gone with him on the start as far as the tug took the ship out to the open sea.

Finally, after those well-to-do streets of the city had grown quiet, except for the roll of wheels of occasional carriages, a swift tread was heard, then Mr. Dysart appeared plainly in sight and came up the steps. Jean hurried to meet him, and drew him into the parlor, holding fast to his hand. He seemed a link between her and her twin.

"Thank you, child; it is late, I cannot sit down; I only came to give you the latest news. So far, so good. Imlay and I got John aboard safely; he stood it better than I expected. We put him to bed in a berth in Captain Locke's cabin. When we left he was sound asleep, and his breathing seemed stronger. Captain Locke is a first-class nurse, and doctor enough for all that is needed; sea-captains have to be a little of everything, you know. As soon as the Coral Queen drops far enough southward, Captain Locke means to wrap John in a blanket and keep him on deck in a hammock. Sea air, rest, giving nature a fair show—we can do nothing else for the lad. Jean, John told me, as I sat by him in his cabin before he went to sleep, that as he would not draw his pocket-money while he was gone, he wanted me to give it monthly to you to use in what he called 'your new fad.' He said if *you* liked it, that was enough. So I will pay you forty dollars a month on account of John's pocket-money. I gave Locke a hundred and twenty-five dollars to deal out to John if he wanted to buy curios that were brought aboard ship in any of the ports they visited."

"I shall spend that money in John's name on boys of about John's age," said Jean promptly.

"John told me to tell you both good-by again, and that he was sorry he had made you so unhappy. Also he said, if he never came back, I was to see that Jean inherited everything that was his, and he knew she would use it very much better than ever he did." Mr. Dysart stopped. Jean had given a long, low cry, like some wounded and hunted creature, and had fled from the room. They saw her slender dark figure pass shadow-like up the stairs and lose itself in the gloom of the upper hall. "Faithful and tender heart," said Mr. Dysart; "if her brother had been like her, or worthy of her, I should have been a well-contented guardian."

Darkness settled over all the house, the hours of the night rolled slowly by, the tossing waves rocked John's ocean home, and the winds carried him each moment farther and farther from all the love and opportunity of which he had proved himself unworthy.

For a day or two Jean seemed completely crushed by the troubles of the past few weeks; her interest in herself or in her people at the

Rents slumbered; she could only think of John; she was needlessly taking herself to task for not having done enough for him.

"Why could n't I have done more? I ought to have been worth something more to him. Why has all my real help been given to strangers and none to John?"

"Jean," said Aunt Prudence, "how much or how little you have done for him or for any one you cannot now know. Here we are surrounded by the unknown; the real extent of our words and acts is lost in the infinite distances. We see but a little way into the future; all earthly horizons are of a narrow bound. All that is asked of us is to do our best—'to occupy' what the Lord has given us of opportunity until he comes. Things that seem smallest to us now may seem the largest, looming in the clear light of the Judgment Day. How little is a cup of cold water! Yet Christ sets it as a gift of price, to be well reckoned of by him. That little box of ointment, worth but a moderate sum, has filled the ages with its fragrance. One silent look our Lord gave Peter; yet that look lived in the apostle as the mainspring of all that he ever after was, and from Peter it has lived on in the church for nineteen hundred years a power for good."

"If all that power lies in littles," said Jean, "I must not spare any more time to what cannot be altered now, but must get back to my work. These people at the Rents may be worth as much to themselves or to others as my poor John is to me. Aunt Prudence, what do you say to having that forty dollars a month John left for me to use put into some place where boys can stay of evenings? What do you say to a big room, warmed and lighted well, with a few things for gymnastics, a few papers, games and pictures, and some one to teach gymnastics, reading, and writing? Perhaps our minister would go down there now and then with a magic lantern, and give them Bible scenes and travels in foreign lands. It shall be John's gift. I should put up over the door, 'THE JOHN CARDIFF COMFORT HALL.' What do you think of that?"

"I like the plan well. Suppose we get Mr. Moultrie's help and set about it at once."

"I think John would like it; I am sure he meant me to do something like that. I believe he was more interested in what we were doing at the Rents than he wanted to say."

"Certainly when he comes back he will see that you have been no unfaithful steward of the money he left with you."

"Mrs. Jennings was here when you were out to-day, and she is very anxious to have more done to help the little girls. She says that these working girls do not go to school at all after they are thirteen; when at that age the girl is expected to go to whatever work she is to make her living by. Yet many of these little girls are kept at home most of the time because they are thirteen; kept at home to work, to tend babies or because they have no clothing fit to wear to school. After these girls are thirteen, Mrs. Jennings says their only education comes from newspapers and from what they see about them. The papers that attract them most and are easiest to get are usually the worst. I 'm sure they do n't see very much that is good. So they grow up and do n't know how to cut and make clothes, unless that happens to be the work they live by; they do n't know how to keep house, to cook, or wash and iron, unless laundry is their business. Mrs. Jennings says these girls know so little that they can easily be cheated and imposed upon by the Sweaters, and that while hundreds of these poor little helpless, ignorant girl-children are turned out into the world to earn their own living, there are dozens of cruel men who grow rich by playing all manner of tricks on them, grinding down their wages, taxing them, fining them, changing the marks on their piece-work. Why, Aunt Prudence, while Mrs. Jennings was here talking my very blood ran cold, cold, as I thought of the miseries of my poor little sisters!"

Jean's eyes blazed and her cheeks flushed; in the woes of "her little sisters" she had for a time forgotten the case of her wayward brother.

"There is a law about a certain number of month's yearly schooling," said Miss Cardiff.

"It is a law more often evaded than heeded, I fear," said Mr. Moultrie, who had come in. "Boys are something like those open sins that go beforehand into judgment; when they are not in school, they are ravaging the streets, and the exasperated policemen seize or make a note of them, so back to school they go. But the girls are like the sins that follow after, and reap their harvest in a long by-and-by, for the girls hide in the houses and for a long time are forgotten."

CHAPTER X.

WHAT IS THAT TO THEE!

> "I do not ask my cross to understand,
> My way to see:
> Better in darkness just to feel thy hand,
> And follow thee."

AFTER Miss Cardiff had removed her tenants from the houses which she had hired for them for six months while she was repairing the Rents, old Mr. Gridley had secured an agent and rented his property in the most reckless tenement-house fashion. The care which Miss Cardiff had expended in the sanitation of the buildings was soon forgotten, cleanliness and ventilation were at a discount. Windows were broken, refuse encumbered the passage-ways, the drains were stopped, the stair ballusters had been used for fuel during the February cold, and many of the thresholds had followed them. The basements were rented for an opium-joint, a dive, a beer-hall, and a grog-shop; families were allowed to rent one room and receive into it men lodgers. Those deeper depths of deepest depths, the boarding or lodging-rooms, flourished; the agent felt sure of making sixty or seventy per cent. on the invested money when all the large rooms were rookeries. Winter only was waited for to witness the disappearance of doors, steps, and baseboards; there had already, in six months, been a murder, a suicide, two mysterious deaths, two deaths of children "from inanition"—in plain English, neglect and starvation. A number of arrests had occurred for burglary, assault, and pocket-picking; in fact, the property of Mr. Gridley was rivalling the reputation of Cardiff Rents in its evil prime. Miss Cardiff found her zealous care for the improvement of her tenants antagonized in every step by the enormities fostered in the Gridley tenements. Something must be done.

Miss Cardiff gave a small dinner in mid-June. There were present Mr. Dysart, Dr. and Mrs. Imlay, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Jennings, Miss Cardiff's pastor, Dr. Yancy, and his wife; these with Jean and Mr. Moultrie filled the table over which Miss Prudence Cardiff presided. What had been done and what could be done at the Rents was discussed, and Miss Cardiff gave a succinct report of the money expended and invested, with the income now received from the buildings.

"It is improving property," said Miss Prudence, "and the income is not only fair, but while not exorbitant, it is good—more than would be realized from bank stock, railroad shares, or government bonds. Much more good might be done, and the whole neighborhood improved, if we could wipe out the iniquities of the Gridley tenement-houses. From them disease and debauchery spread; the men and women of the quarter are tempted; the children have immoral examples, the women and girls are terrified, and respectable tenants are driven away. Mr. Moultrie suggested to me that a syndicate might be formed to purchase Mr. Gridley's property. If we buy now, before destruction goes further, we shall have less to lay out in repairs and sanitation."

Said Mr. Moultrie: "I have lately received a little money, ten thousand dollars, left me by an aunt in Scotland who had been very hostile to my parents; I told Miss Cardiff that if others could be found to make up the needed purchase-money for the Gridley houses, I would gladly put this little fortune of mine into the purchase-fund."

"I could also put in ten thousand," said Miss Cardiff.

"I believe it is both noble philanthropy and a good business investment," said Mr. Dysart; "and as I have fifteen thousand that I can convert promptly, I will be one of the purchasers of these buildings, if we who purchase are agreed to conduct the enterprise as Cardiff

Rents are now conducted, in the interest of humanity."

"As a minister," said Dr. Yancy, "I am not expected to be very rich: 'the Lord is the inheritance of Levi;' but Mrs. Yancy and I have five thousand that we can invest here, and I think I can interest one of my church officers who can take a much larger part in the matter."

Dr. Imlay and Mr. Carl Jennings were also ready to be among the purchasers of the Gridley property, and Mr. Jennings was appointed to visit the old gentleman, acquaint him with the enormities which were being committed under the shadow of his name, and request him to sell his property at its proper valuation to the proposed partners in the purchase.

"I don't suppose," said Dr. Yancy, "that the old gentleman has any idea how affairs go down there; he kept the places closed because he did not feel able to prepare them for habitation; and after Miss Cardiff had put them in order, he found it easy to turn them over to an agent. He is an amiable old man, and very feeble."

"We shall not find him ill to deal with, I think," said Miss Prudence; "he made no effort to drive a hard bargain with me, in fact, he was very reasonable, and told me he was interested in the experiment, and that if he were in his prime again he would like to undertake a work of the kind himself."

"How often," said Dr. Yancy, "do people at the end of life turn for a backward look, and vainly wish that their energies had been life long directed to different ends! They see the rich harvests others are reaping, and wish that their seed-sowing had been other than it was. As, no doubt, this property will speedily come into our hands, what shall we do about it?"

"Turn out the agent," said Mr. Dysart. "The agents who handle these tenement-houses are usually harder upon the poor than the landlords would be if they took the trouble to learn the facts in the case."

"The facts in the case are so terrible," said Mr. Moultrie, "that they would destroy the sleep and appetite of the landlords, and so they must have as intermediary, an agent who is less fastidious. The house agents and the middlemen or sweaters of the workers, are as 'the kine of Bashan, which crush the needy.' They remind me of that incident in the life of Silvio Pellico, when after long years in the terrible Spielberg Prison he was released, and when passing through Vienna his conductors made haste to turn him from the path of the Emperor, lest his wan, emaciated face might 'distress' the monarch who had so long and unjustly imprisoned him! The sensitiveness of landlords who cheerfully receive from twenty-five to fifty and even eighty per cent. on slum rents, reminds me of the sensitiveness of the Emperor of Austria."

"Of course we do not want an agent," said Mr. Dysart; "we want to come into contact and knowledge ourselves. The next step, I should say, would be to clear out those cellars. No more rent for abominations. Then the lodging or boarding rooms, packed full of corrupt and corrupting humanity, must be cleared out; also once more the work of sanitation and improving and embellishing must be done."

"Embellishing?" questioned Dr. Gancy. "I like the word in that connection; but explain it, if I am to talk up this investment to some of my solid men."

"Our embellishment," said Miss Cardiff, "consists in paint of attractive colors, tinted calsomine or lime-wash, and brightly flowered wall-paper, where we put paper on."

"Dr. Gancy," said Jean, "it is enough to make one cry sometimes, to see how eager those poor people are for a little beauty in their homes. The children bring in any fading branch or flowers that they find about the streets, and if it is a slip that can be made to grow, in a rusty tin can or an old broken cup or bowl, you should see the care taken of it! Colored cards or advertisement pictures are picked up in the streets, and stuck up on the dirty, ragged walls. They long for beauty as much as we do; they may have different ideas of what beauty is, and what to us seems gaudy is to them lovely; that is because they have had no opportunities to cultivate taste. I know one room where all manner of fragments of broken china, pretty china bits from rich people's ash barrels, are set up along the window frames as a choice ornamentation; and another, where the red and yellow ribbons from cigars, such as are swept into the streets and waste baskets, have been picked up and hung along the walls."

"Jean has made a clearance of her old playroom and our attic, as far as pictures and any thing in the way of ornament could be found," said Miss Prudence.

"I think she has set hundreds of slips in our green-house, and as soon as they were growing well has given them to the people down in the Rents and near there. Once we clear out the nuisances in the Gridley building we will introduce beauty there. I think of providing the windows with outside window boxes for flowers; that is done in England in many places, with the best effect—not only in making the homes and streets more attractive, but in improving the manners and morals of the inhabitants.

Christ's lesson, 'Consider the lilies how they grow,' was not the only flower lesson he gave his children."

"We will remember the craving for beauty there," said Dr. Gancy. "Tell me, are your tenants destructive? I have heard so many say that it was idle to restore such properties much, as the occupants would destroy as fast as one improved."

"In my observation, and I have taken pains to inform myself fully, half the tenants are not destructive; and of that half there will be perhaps half, who will try to mend and keep affairs in order; they will paste on loose paper, nail down loose boards, putty up a cracked window. The destructive careless, fifty per cent., are easily handled: you can coax or scare them into a certain amount of carefulness; threats of ejectment, or of a suit for 'wanton destruction of property,' will, added to the example of the careful half, keep them in line."

"I was discussing this question lately with a house owner, and he said that it was kindness wasted to fix up rooms for sneak thieves, pickpockets, and that ilk," said Mr. Carl Jennings.

"The answer to that is easy," said Mr. Dysart: "thief or not, if he is accepted as a tenant, and pays his rent he has a right to a tenant's proper privileges; he has a right to a whole floor; to a window that will open and shut, to a safe staircase, and a chimney that will draw. The landlord who takes his eight, ten, or twelve dollars a month, and does not give him fair return in proper housing, simply puts himself in the same category as his thief tenant."

"Speaking of agents," said Mr. Moultrie, "there is to be found in many of those tenement-houses a pernicious class doing more harm than good—a person called a 'janitor' or 'housekeeper,' is given a room, and supposed to keep the halls clean and oversee the state of drains, closets and water-pipes. There is seldom any decent care taken to get clean orderly people for these positions; a vote or some other concession, is paid for by the appointment, and the janitor or housekeeper neglects all the supposed duties of the position, keeps the most filthy room on the premises, and is sure to make no reports about closed drains and defective sewage system, that might seem to be a call for expense upon agent or landlord."

"If we can get Gridley property into our hands," said Miss Prudence, "we will make Mr. Gess janitor there. That man is earnest to do good, a sincere Christian, I think. It is wonderful what an amount of kindness he can do among his neighbors, though he works early and late at hard, poorly paid work, to maintain his family.

More than once he has given away his dinner to some breakfastless fellow-laborer, on the ground that as he has had breakfast, and was sure of supper, he ought to share the day's meals in some way. Yet no doubt it is hard to work as masons' tender all day, dinnerless."

"Miss Jean," said Remech the butler, coming behind his young lady's chair, "there's a man wants to see you, a very common looking person, miss, says his name is Gess. He insisted I must tell you; but really, miss, he is not worth your attending to."

Remech the old family servant having thus announced his views, returned to his stand by the side-board. The party at the table had sat talking long after the last course of the dessert had been served and now rose to go to the parlors, while Jean gave orders that Gess should come up into the hall to speak with her.

Down at the Rents, or any other part of the Kelso Street neighborhood, Gess could speak frankly and clearly to Miss Cardiff or Jean; his foot was on his native heath, he realized his own good intentions, and stood unabashed. On the contrary he was now much overwhelmed when he beheld Jean in her dinner dress, coming down the hall to meet him. He had hitherto seen her only in the severely simple elegance of her black raiment, dress so good that it looked plainness itself. Now she wore a white gown trimmed with black lace and black ribbons; she moved noislessly over the velvet carpet, above her head glowed the richly frescoed ceiling, pictures of price were on the walls about her; bronze and marble statuary peered here and there from stairway niches, or stood transfigured in the splendor of colored light, streaming through a great stained glass door that opened into the conservatory. Gess was so overawed by all this hitherto unimagined magnificence, that he could not speak. He held his old felt hat in his two hands, and his eyes searched anxiously the depths of the bent crown, for a statement of his errand; finding nothing, he slowly turned the hat over, with a care that suggested fears lest the unfound help should be yet lurking inside and drop out. He closely studied the outside of the crown and brim, then turned the hat over again and passed the rim around and around between his fingers.

"Well, Mr. Gess?" said Jean encouragingly.

"It 's about Mrs. Fenn," said Gess suddenly. "'Mandy Ann Ridder said as you 'd not want things to go on without your knowing of it."

"Certainly not," said Jean catching at this vague statement; "is Mrs. Fenn sick?"

"You see Nat, that's her oldest, sixteen. Well, I got him a place as masons' tender—much too heavy for a lad, but it was that or nothin'; an' bein orkard, why he let slip a hod-full o' brick, an' broke his foot, an' got took to the 'ospital three week ago. Hospital 's a nice place, but Nat, he needed work an' wages, you see."

"I see," said Jean overwhelmed with grief and shame 'that one of her people' had been in so dire a strait and she had not known of it. But she had been occupied with John and her private sorrows, and had of late only been to the Milk Dépôt and the kindergarten. How poor a steward had she been for her Lord, this month past!"

"Why did n't you tell my aunt, Miss Cardiff?"

"Well, miss, you see, she has done so much for us all, an' we fair hates to seem like we 're fallin' back on her all the time; an' allus in a hole fur her to pull us out. We might as well be drunk an' incapable an' done with it, barrin' the wickedness."

"We want to know all and help all that we can. How is Mrs. Fenn?"

"You see, miss," said Gess, laboriously resuming his tale, "Joe, fourteen, works with the butcher, an' gets his board; an' he gets enough to pay the rent. What clothes Joe, I don't know, only he pays the rent. Peggy, she gets her board an' clothes workin' out; she 's twelve, an' there 's three more little ones to home to be fed an' covered; so, when Ned got hurt, it took all Miss Fenn ar'n't to put a bite in four mouths an' she fell back with her payin' on that machine. Forty hard-airned dollars, got of half starvin' an' hard workin', she 's paid, an' ten more was to be paid. I 'll allow, miss, if you or anybody with a full pocket-book went to that machine-shop, they would have sold you the thing for thirty-five or forty; but fifty it was to her—for as the Holy Book says, 'the destruction of the poor is their poverty.' So, miss, three weeks ago Mrs. Fenn she could n't pay her weekly installment. The agent he growled. Next time it was the same, an' she beggin' an' pleadin' for him to be easy on her. To-day he comes again, an' bein' there was no money, sez he, 'That money is due to-morrer, five dollars,' he sez, 'an' as you do n't have it,' he sez, 'I 'm comin' with a cart and take the machine; mind you I do.' That same agent, miss, he is one of those that the Holy Book say do 'pant after the dust of the earth on the heads of the poor!"

"But," said Jean, who dwelt habitually in the atmosphere of the seventh beatitude, "He did wait two weeks, you see."

"True, miss, and if I 'm wrong judging him, may the Lord forgive me, for the Holy Book says, 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' and plenty are the sins of Peter Gess—if the Lord goes to counting up. Also the Holy Book says, 'Charity thinketh no evil,' and mebbe I 'm wronging that agent when I lay it out that he jes' let it run up a purpose, to be more 'n Mis' Fenn would be able to beg or to borrow, and him then sure of that machine, on which she, poor soul, has paid its hull wuth of forty dollars, worked, as one may say, out of her heart's blood. Then he sells it to some one else the same, an' has like luck, an' so he sells it four or five times over, an' when it looks pretty bad, he sells it to some one out an' out for a matter of twenty-five dollars. Oh, miss, they does it constant," and Gess having got in his plea against the agent, searched carefully for the crown of his hat.

"And Mrs. Fenn?" urged Jean.

"Oh," said Gess waking up. "Why, miss, when she see that machine as good as gone, an' her hopes perished, an' as the Holy Book says, 'her destruction coming as a whirlwind,' what does she do but tip over in a dead faint, an' set all them three scared little children screamin' tremenjious. Took J'rushy an' 'Mandy Ann a powerful long time to bring her to, an' her like to go off agin any minute; an' 'Mandy Ann sez, 'You go tell the young lady, Peter Gess; for here 's a time when we can't be pertic'lar, havin' come to the end of our rope,' she says. An' J'rushy she agreed with her."

"Ten dollars, you say, is the full amount due, and if she pays that to-morrow, and takes a receipt, she has her machine safe for always?"

"'Less it 's seized for rent," suggested Gess, the custom of all his life still wrapping him in its heavy adumbration.

Jean laughed. "We should never do that, Gess. Now we have some guests here, and I am going to take up a collection of ten dollars among them to secure that machine. I shall want you to take the money home very carefully, and in the morning have Sime Ridder and Mr. Hapgood there to see that it is paid, and the agent gives his receipt in full for it."

"Oh, miss, we 'll do that most joyful!"

"I suppose Mrs. Fenn had n't had her supper yet or you?"

"Supper, miss? As for me, J'rushy had a fine bowl of mush and molasses. I came off in too much hurry to eat it, but it will be there when I get back, unless the kids got onerly hungry and ate it up. As for Mis' Fenn, a stale biscuit or so, and a drink of water is all they have, barring a nickel now and then for herring or meal and molasses."

"I think this rescue of the machine should be celebrated with a good party," said Jean gleefully. "I'm going to have you eat supper here, Gess, while I'm collecting the money and Remeck is putting up a basket of things for Mrs. Fenn to have a feast with when you go home."

Jean stepped to a portiere behind which she was morally sure Remeck had been listening during all her interview with Gess. Old Remeck could not consider that his young mistress was more than a little child, and he took many liberties in view of his long services.

"Remeck, I want you to see that this man has a good supper, meat, tea, vegetables—plenty of good things."

"Yes, miss," said Remeck, who had been moved to some pity by what he had heard, "but you know cook hates poor people beyond poison, and she's in such a tantrum to-day! She'll fly out, if I take him to the kitchen, and I can't take him into my closet, miss!"

"Take him out to sit under the ash tree in the yard, or on the conservatory steps. You've given John and me many a treat on those steps when we were little, Remeck!"

This flash of reminiscence brought tears into the old butler's eyes. "I'd do anything for you, Miss Jean!" he exclaimed.

"I know it, Remeck; so while this good man is eating his supper, I wish you'd make up a basket of things for him to carry to a poor widow. Put in plenty of cold roast beef, and a pie; some cheese, a big loaf, a glass of jelly, some pickles, some eggs, and some cake. Don't spare the cake, please, Remeck; I don't believe those three little children ever tasted cake, and only think how much you used to give John and me, and how angry our nurse would be."

Remeck chuckled as he recalled the tiny, curly-headed tots that used to hang to his coat-skirts and clamor for cake.

Jean felt sure that the basket would be well filled. "Use some kitchen dishes and a splint basket, so she can keep them all, Remeck. It will set her up in housekeeping."

Then she went to the drawing-room and folding her small, soft, pink-tinted hands into a cup, she stood in the doorway and artlessly told the tale of sorrow; the sad undertone borne up to them in their luxury from the restless sea of trouble that beats about the purlieus of the poor. It never occurred to Jean how gracious and beautiful she was, as she stood there speaking, and then she passed around among the sympathetic group, and held forth her living contribution-basket. The pink palms were well filled.

"Ten dollars and a half," announced Jean. "I'm so glad you were all here to give, because—Mr. Dysart, please don't think I am a bad financier—my money is nearly all gone for this month."

Jean gave Gess the basket and the money, with further injunctions as to careful dealing with the agent, and vigorous insistence on a grand feast for the Fenns.

"She'll be happy, I warrant you, miss; but not so happy as you, for the Holy Book says, 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor,' and 'He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.'"

"How good it must be," said Jean wistfully, "to know so much of the Bible as you do, Mr. Gess."

"Yes, miss, it is like cold water to a thirsty soul. I fairly hanker after the Scriptures. They come so good and pat to everything. I allus had a powerful good memory, and evenings I sit by the window or on the steps reading, and when it is too dark, why there's the 'lectric in the halls; and I stand under that and read and read. 'Give us a bit, Gess,' they says to me, and I read out a portion. Tell you what, miss, the p'lice don't know the better doings down Kelso Street way come from that Holy Book and the decent homes you ladies have give us in the Rents. Decent homes, decent doings—'t ain't a reg'lar rule, miss, but it's true pretty often."

"To think," said Jean to her aunt that night, "I 've been at home nursing my own griefs, when thinking about them could n't help at all; and I 've kept away from those poor people that needed my help so much."

"I can't but admire the delicacy of the people in trying to look out for themselves, and not bringing all their troubles to me, lest it should seem a call for help," said Miss Prudence.

CHAPTER XI.

"*ME 'N' PARDNER.*"

> "The mournful truth is everywhere confessed:
> Slow rises worth, by poverty oppressed."

JUNE closed in happiness and beauty for Jean. Captain Locke had sent home to Mr. Dysart two letters by ships that he had met. The letters told that John was improving: the weather was fine, John did not suffer from sea-sickness; he swung day and night in his hammock on deck, fanned by the warm airs that blew from the Windward Islands. Captain Locke thought his charge "would pull through." Moreover, John had said one day, referring to his course, that he "had made a mess of it," and that "his twin sister was worth ten of him." All this was but a frail and treacherous foundation whereon to build the fair fabric of a splendid hope; nevertheless Jean so built and was happy. Her mind thus more at ease about her brother, Jean returned to her work in the Kelso Street neighborhood. After sending the money for the rescue of Mrs. Fenn's machine, Jean shamefacedly stayed away from *Cardiff Rents* for a week or too; she dreaded the lavish thanks and praises that would be heaped upon her by 'Mandy Ann, J'rushy Gess, and Mrs. Fenn.

To hold her hands out, and in a few minutes find ten dollars in them; to tell Remeck to fill a basket with provisions, this had been so easy to her. But the poor people appreciated it according to the benefit that they had received, perhaps according to the hearty human sympathy that had gone with the gift. When Ned Fenn came home from the hospital, Dr. Yancy found him a place better suited to his years and slender physique than that of masons' tender, and Jean went to inform him of it. Ned was in raptures to think of being in a store, a big drygoods store, albeit his place was to be in the packing-room, among boxes, straw, and electric lights, so that he never saw, much less trod, the gorgeous upper floors. "Who knows but I'll rise and be up head some day!" he cried to Jean.

"I hope so," said Jean severely; "but remember, you cannot rise unless you keep clean and know something. You must go to night school and study hard, whether you are tired in the evening or not; and you must keep clean; you must comb your hair and scour your skin well with soap and hot water, and be sure to keep your nails clean. The first time you are paid you must buy some soap, a little five-cent scrubbing-brush, and some blacking; you can get them all for forty cents at that Bee Hive store two squares from here."

"Mind, Ned, you do exactly as miss says," admonished Mrs. Fenn.

"I will that," said Ned, very amenable in the roseate glow of his possible future. "And, miss, where 'll I go to night school?"

"My aunt and some others have bought Mr. Gridley's houses. They are to be done over like this, to be the New Rents. Those people in the basement are warned out, and all the basement is to be turned into a "JOHN CARDIFF COMFORT HALL" for lads. My brother, John Cardiff, who has gone on a voyage for his health, left money for that, and he hopes it will do you all much good. There is to be a bath-room, a little gymnasium, a reading-room, and a night school. We hope all will be ready in a month."

"Well, ai n't that a blessed thing for your brother to do!" said Mrs. Fenn, rubbing tears from her eyes, taking for this duty a pair of blue overalls which she was seaming up. "It do beat all how much kinder-disposed folks are than we in our poor way took them to be. All that for boys! For sure he must be a blessed young man, and a vast comfort to you, miss. The Lord send him home safe an' well!"

"Why did n't you give that fellow the forty cents for that toilet outfit you ordered so master-fully, Jean?" Thus queried, as they reached the street, a young friend of Jean's who was with her.

"Because I want him to be sure and use it; he *needs* to use it, if he is going to commend himself in Alney's store. If the things come too easy he may neglect them, but after paying so big a sum as forty cents for them he will be bound to get his money's worth out of them," said Jean.

"Big a sum!" laughed the girl friend; "why, I think forty-cent candy pretty cheap."

"So did I. Maybe so do I now, if I 'm after candy; but I tell you I 've found that money can buy sweeter things than candy."

"It *must* be fun to go about here as you do and have all the people regarding you as a kind of angel in a black grenadine, and obeying every word you say to them."

"They are far enough from doing that, I can tell you," said Jean merrily; "the times they do n't do as they are told far outnumber the times they do. Now I wanted to stop and see a Mrs. Gess, but she is always washing, which is necessary, and she is always sopping the floor and herself and piling dripping clothes on her chairs and tables, and not half rinsing the duds—all of which is not necessary, for the nurse and the Bible woman have told her dozens of times just how to do it properly. Seems to me *I've* learned by hearing them tell her, and she do n't improve in her ways at all. Her husband is a real good man. I wish she did make things more comfortable for him. Then I did n't take you in to see 'Mandy Ann Ridder; for though 'Mandy Ann is a very nice woman, she always will wear a dirty apron, and insists on letting her baby suck a rag with sugar or a fig tied up in it; and the nurse has told her better a hundred times. The apron and the sugar-rag are so disgusting! I just passed by on the other side, like the Levite in the gospel, and I know I 'll be sorry for it presently and wish I had more patience with people."

"Yesterday I read something that Douglass Jerrold said about patience: 'The cup of patience is set round with diamonds from the mines of Eden; it is carved by angelic hands; it is filled at the fount of eternal goodness.'"

"No doubt," replied Jean, "it is as superior an article as the Holy Grail. But I fear I shall never be the Sir Gallahad to find it. Now I 'm going to stop at a coffee-stall down there. Rufus Hapgood, who keeps it, is one of my trials. I do so want him to truly reform, to be somebody; and there are times when I feel sure he is going to be all right. Then the next thing I know he has fallen away again, and it is a thing to be thankful for if he has n't dragged Sime Ridder along with him. Here 's the stall. Why, no one here!"

"There seems to be a little dispute with fists going on down the street," said Miss Cary.

"Yes, and that 's Rufus Hapgood. Let us go on. No, they 've settled it, and he is coming back. Well, we 'll wait."

Rufus came up brushing his hat and trousers with his hand, pulling down his torn shirt-sleeve, running his fingers through his hair, and otherwise trying to make himself presentable. His face was flushed, not merely by his quarrel.

"Miss Cardiff, I 'm more ashamed than I can tell that you should have found me in a common street quarrel! If I 'd dreamed ladies were near I 'd let that chap off with the nickel short on his breakfast. But seeing I did not know ladies were around, and seeing I needed my money, I went for him—rather roughly, I 'll allow. It 's a failing of mine to lose my temper. 'I 'm poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient.' *Wm. Shakespeare*, I think; perhaps it is n't. Miss, I did hear that Miss Cardiff and Mr. Moultrie and some others had bought the Gridley houses. If they are done up like the Rents we 'll have a happy neighborhood. Indeed, ladies, such work is the highest form of charity: 'the health of a nation is its wealth,' and if there were no slums there 'd be few epidemics. The rich ignore the poor and pack them into squalid quarters, and out of those quarters the poor send cholera, typhus, scarlet and yellow fever, smallpox, and diphtheria back to infest the homes of the rich. It 's a queer thing, ladies, that the poor folks in these slums do n't die half so fast of the diseases generated among them as do the rich to whom they send them."

"I hope, Mr. Hapgood, that you 'll do all you can to help this neighborhood to be better, now that the Gridley houses are to be brought up to decency," suggested Jean with dignity.

"Indeed, Miss Cardiff, I ought, I ought; but I 'm a very unsatisfactory person, very unsatisfactory. It has always been so with me. '*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*' *Horace.*"

Then as Miss Cary, Jean's friend, was evidently greatly amazed at his conversation, Rufus took a fresh start with much courage.

"Miss, I must add my little praise to the way in which these ladies do their good work. There are those who make a profession of charity for their own benefit. To be at the head of a great charity, have the name of an officer, a big salary, and a splendid office, with plenty of well-paid clerks to toady to you, *does* give one importance. Some charities so managed are close corporations, and the people who run them forget that a trust fund for charity is a sacred trust. People get up affairs of this sort for the prominence they get out of it. Following for loaves and fishes, miss, began when embodied Charity walked the earth. *Bible.*"

Rufus suddenly stopped. He had lost the thread of his discourse, and standing in open-mouthed distress for a moment, anxiously looked into his coffee-pot for the missing link. Jean seized the opportunity to walk away.

"What kind of a man *is* that?" demanded Miss Cary.

"A former gentleman and college student, wrecked by drink. He has been drinking to-day; he always talks with extra fluency, quotes Latin, and then suddenly brings up in a blank silence. Poor man, will he ever improve?"

"Perhaps you ought to get him converted, Jean."

"I have tried, and I can't. Now there was Mr. Gess; he was converted, and he is one of the best men—so quietly useful, always trying, as he calls it, 'to serve God in the by-places.' I think I understand it: I 've been trying to convert Hapgood myself, and have made poor work of it; but the Lord converted Peter Gess."

They were at the door of the kindergarten. Mrs. Lark, Amy's mother, was walking a particularly fat and dirty little chap of three, and Amy, swaying to and fro in a willow rocker was singing "Grandfather's Clock" at the top of her voice, which fortunately rung true and sweet.

"Why, Amy," said Jean, "you are as good as your name; you sing like a lark, sure enough."

Amy gave a happy little laugh. The world seemed a good world to Amy since her mother regularly received four dollars a week and their dinners, for such easy work as running the baby department of a free and easy kindergarten; while the brood of four little ones were regularly in the kindergarten, and had clean aprons and soup daily! Amy felt that life had little further to offer.

"You seem to have a hard youngster to manage there, Mrs. Lark," smiled Jean; "can you get him clean? And how are your eyes?"

"They 're better every day, miss, thank you. Oh, I 'll get this youngster clean; Amy found him yesterday; his mother lies sick, and the father, a decent man, has his hands full looking out for them all outside of work hours. We brought in two of them, and the bigger one is washed an' in yonder, pretty as a peach! They 're German folk, just moved into the Gridley Rents, and feeling mighty bad about how things goes there. They had to take it, for her sickness has brought them into hard times. Amy heard tell your aunt had bought the Gridley houses, and she cheered her up fine, telling her she made sure you 'd clean out them pesky cellars, and have things fair and right. There now, Carl, my little man, hold there while I scour your head a bit more, and then you shall have a clean pinny and a piece of bread."

"What 's a pinny?" asked Miss Cary, regarding the dimpled Carl with great interest.

"It 's an apron. Mammy is *so* old-fashioned?" cried Amy, with a burst of laughter, as fresh as if it rippled over green meadows instead of the broken pavement of Kelso Street.

"Well, now, so I am old-fashioned," chuckled Mrs. Lark. "I was brought up in Kent, England, in a bit of a thatched house until I was a matter of twelve years old. Here 's Amy, I am thinking she lays out to be a fashionable lady when she grows up, but I do n't know just how she 'll come at it. 'So 's you 're good, Amy,' I says to her, 'so 's you 're good, it 's enough.' Miss, have you seen 'Mandy Ann Ridder's baby lately? It looks dretful peaked. I 'm most afraid she 'll lose that, same as she did the others. Poor soul, I hope she 'll raise it! There 's Sime, he 's a good fellow in the main, and he does set store by the little 'un, an if he loses it I 'm afeard he 'll fall away entirely. Sime, he

’lowed the other day that if the Lord did n’t do the right thing by him in regards to this baby, he would n’t have no confidence in him no more.”

Then seeing the horrified looks passing between Jean and Miss Cary, at what seemed to them to be almost blasphemy, she explained, “Sime was n’t meanin’ a bit of harm, Sime was n’t, he was only expressin’ of hisself.”

“There, now,” said Jean to her friend, “I said I would be sorry that I had avoided going to look after Mrs. Ridder merely because of such trifles as a dirty apron, and a fig tied in a rag. I ’m ashamed of myself that I am so intolerant! We ’ll go back there and see about that baby, as soon as we have seen the kindergarten and stopped to speak with Mrs. Lindsay.”

The children in the kindergarten were admired and laughed at, called ‘dear little tots’; and peppermint drops found their way from Miss Cary’s pocket into their ready mouths. One midget with laughing eyes and golden curls so delighted Miss Cary that she declared she was resolved to persuade her mother to adopt the little one.

Then on to Mrs. Lindsay’s. “I ’ve come to tell you,” said Jean, “that my dear brother left money with me to establish a ‘John Cardiff Comfort Hall,’ for young lads, a place of resort especially for evenings. I knew you would be glad, because you are troubled about what Aleck and Jamie will do evenings."

"Indeed I am," said Mrs. Lindsay. "They laddies are juist an age not to want to stop at hame, watchin' we women folk ply oor needles, an the street 's a bad schule for them. My guid man before he died, he said to me, 'Bonnie woman, ne'er let oor laddie rin the streets at nicht, or he 'll turn out a neer-do-weel.'"

"We intend to use the basement of the Gridley houses for the Comfort Rest. We have bought that property to manage just as we do the Cardiff Rents," added Jean.

"Noo the guid Lord be praised," cried Mrs. Lindsay holding up both her hands. "Is 'na it clean surprisin' hoo we pray for things an' never really expec' to receive them; an hoo amazed we are when the guid Lord answers. Weel, weel, when the Gridley hooses were rented sae ill, says Sime Ridder—coming along wi' his pockets fu' o' rats—the creetur he says, 'There 's no ony houp for Kelso Street neighborhood. What Cardiff Rents builds oop, Gridley Rents will destroy. An' is 'na it a shame the kind o' traps laid there for sic foolish men as me?' Janey speaks up, 'Ye maun be a foolish man surely, Mr. Ridder, gif sic contramptions as yon wiles you off fra 'Mandy Ann and the bairnie.' But

Mrs. Martin comes in one day and she says, 'We looked for peace an' behold trouble. Satan has come down in great micht,' she says, 'an' established hisself in Gridley Rents. Noo,' she says to Janey an' me, 'unless we can pray him oot, thaur he stays to confound us a'.' So from that oot, every Sunday afternoon here Mrs. Martin, an' Aggie, an' Janey, an' me, we hae read a bit o' Scripter, an prayed the Lord to send help to Kelso Street and take oot the devil's stronghold. Noo he has answered abundantly, an' I 'm the astonished woman! Janey, coom here! The Lord has risen up to oor help, and Gridley Rents is to be turned into decent abidin' places, an' something done for the laddies moreover! Surely the Lord has done exceeding abundantly mair than we could ask or think."

Janey came, rosy and smiling, wiping her round red arms on her sacking apron. "Well, auntie, I told you so, only you would not believe it," she said.

"I would no. I 'm waur than Peter wi' his sinkin'."

"Where is Bessie Lowther?" asked Jean.

"She 's gone to work. She got a place for a bit in a white goods factory. It 's poor pay, and Bessie, she craves pretty things; she wants a pink calico frock, and some ribbons and a straw bonnet. Bessie 's wearing an old felt, and she hates it. She said if she could look nice, she'd go to church with us Sunday morning and evening; but I don't know if she would. She's looking and running after high-priced things she sees in advertisements. I told her she'd get into trouble, for those places were tricks. Still, I pity Bessie, she's made that way; she's fair *sick* for a little finery, something to look nice on her, poor girl!"

Janey sighed; she was really anxious about Bessie, and as she told her little story, she thought how lovely these two listening girls looked in their fresh summer garb. Why was there such a difference in the fortunes of girls?

"Well, I don't blame her," said Miss Cary emphatically, "I'd feel just so myself. How large is Bessie? Tall as I am?"

"Pretty nearly, miss, and about as slender," said Janey.

"Oh, Mrs. Lindsay, send Alex and Jamie up to see me this evening," said Jean. "Let them come as soon as their day's work is over. They are to have tea in my garden, and then they are to help me look over a lot of games and books, to see what they think would be nice for the John Cardiff Comfort Hall. They will know what lads like."

Mrs. Lindsay's face shone with pride and joy at this invitation. Tea in a garden for her boys! Oh bliss!

Miss Cary caught the look of joyful surprise. She was a girl who thought quickly; she turned to Janey. "When those boys come home to-night they shall bring Bessie a full suit of mine. I think she 'll like it, a spotted cambric dress I wore in the country last year, a hat, shoes, and so on to go with it. My birthday will come next week, and mother told me to have just what I liked to celebrate with. I 'm going to have tea in *my* garden; and I want you and Bessie and your little sister here to come, and I 'll find some others. I 'll send invitations to you, and I 'll send an omnibus to bring you. Will you come?"

Janey and Aggy looked raptures.

"It 's a' vera beautiful, miss," said Mrs. Lindsay, "but I prize the Hall for the boys aboon a'. What to do wi' the evenings I could na tell. They canna even pick o'er the rags. Jock Moore, he locks hissel intil the rag-room alone. He says he picks o'er rags. Maybe he does; but he disna have a large pile to show in the mornin'. Pickin' rags is no so great fun for boys in the evenin's, but there 's the expectation they *may* find somethin', an' that gies some excitement till it."

"How kind of you, you dear girl," said Jean when she and her friend were in the street together, "to think of giving that poor Bessie the pretty things, and to ask them to a garden tea. She 'll be twice as likely to be good if she has something to look forward to! How lovely of you to take such an interest—all this for Bessie, the clothes and the tea. You are talking too of adopting that little Polly orphan."

"I want to do that. I 'll tell mother she used to give me a handsome doll every birthday, now she can give me a live one. But Jean, why is it any lovelier of me than of you to do such things? You are spending all your time and money in such work."

"Yes; but, dear, I seem to have been driven and forced into it. There was my father's death when I was away, and some other things that happened then, with my eyes giving out so, dear John so sick and going off for so long. I 'll tell you how it seems to me: like some children I have seen playing in these streets, and their mothers came to the doors, and called, 'Come in now, children, you 're wanted;' then some ran obediently at once, but the others would not mind, and kept on playing no matter who called, until out came the mothers, or big sisters, and caught and cuffed them, and so brought them in kicking and resisting. That seems to me the way with some people and the kingdom of God:

some come easily and early; some have to be brought in with violence. Here 's Mrs. Ridder's; and the door is open. Good morning, Mrs Ridder; I heard baby was not well."

Mrs. Ridder furtively gave her offending apron a jerk as she rose from her chair, succeeding not in pulling the apron off, but pulling it crooked. "She is so, miss," she said going over to the bed where the pale, thin baby lay asleep. "She was so fat and pink and cunning until these hot days came. Now only see. I 'm heart-sick."

Jean took from the baby's mouth the offensive rag, over which she and Mrs. Ridder had controversy. "Can you expect her to be well, and *that* thing in her little mouth?" she said severely.

"But, miss, she likes it, an' hollers for it; she won't be still without it," urged the mother.

"Because you have made a habit of it. Can't you see that that warm, wet, soiled thing, is sour half the time, and is nothing less than poison, and full of microbes?" Jean looked like an accusing angel: she was strong on this point, she was quoting from the nurse.

"No, miss, I never did put no microbes in it, no."

"They don't wait to be put: they come, they thrive in all such horrid things as that rag, and they 'll kill your baby if you persist in giving her such a rag! But don't cry, let's make a plan: you promise *never* to let her have such a rag again, and this afternoon you wash and iron all your things, and the baby's, and to-morrow morning I 'll come with the carriage and take you both out to the farm where you were last summer, and you shall stay there six weeks, until baby will be fine and hearty. Now be ready to-morrow at nine."

Mrs. Ridder seized her apron with both hands and jerked it off. "There, Miss! I 'll never wear a dirty apron again, and never, never give baby a fig-rag; and you are just like an angel of light, Miss, to me and baby! Oh, there 's no words in me to say my feelin's, Miss; but as Peter Gess says, frequent, 'Feelins is good, but doin's is better.' "

Jean smiled cheerily and with Miss Cary departed.

"Jean, you used to be always in some kind of jolly mischief, finding something new, going somewhere, doing just what you liked. I used to envy you, because mother would not give me so much pocket-money and liberty. You are different now, yet really I believe you are happier."

"I am," said Jean simply, "and for these last two weeks when I have had good news of John to rejoice in, I feel so thankful that it seems that I cannot do enough for others to show my gratitude to God. Aunt read me a verse yesterday, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth;' and another, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of one of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' And I know that these are Christ's brethren, what aunt calls his 'hidden ones' down in the slums."

The two girls had returned to their carriage, and Jean told Louis to drive to the park. "After that," she said to Miss Cary, "I want you to come home and spend the rest of the day with me, and see those boys in the evening."

"Ever so glad to do it," said Miss Cary. "I am enjoying all this immensely. Do you know, I mean to do all I can of this work, and after this last year of school work is over, I shall have more time. Did you think what a very touching thing it was, those two women and two girls meeting every Sunday to pray away the trouble of the Gridley Rents? Who is that Miss Martin?"

"She is *Mrs.* Martin, an old, feeble widow-woman. She never makes any fuss nor complains; she is clean, and well patched; her little room on the corner of Kelso Street is clean and—there! I know she is real, real poor. I have been neglecting her for the others. There is so much to do there, and the troubles of the little children touched me so. Mrs. Martin is certainly one of Christ's own, that I might have served him in helping. I never did a thing for her, but to give her a chromo to hang in her room, a potted geranium for her window, and a loaf of cake on New Year's. Aunt gave her a big print Testament and hymn-book, and a blanket. I remember now, Mr. Moultrie said her room was too high up for such a feeble woman, that some one ought to live with her or next her who would help her a little. Dear me! How negligent I am; that poor soul will be seventy-nine next week. Mrs. Lindsay told me so not long ago."

"Just grandma's age, and what would she do, old darling, left all alone to wait on herself, going errands hot days, and rising to make her fire on cold days? Jean, let us take this old lady's birthday in charge. We'll find a better down-stairs room, and we will furnish it: I know our houses will afford spare bits of things enough to make her real cosey. We'll get all ready without letting her know. Suppose we provide things for a high tea, and have those Lindsay folks get it ready, and ask some others to eat it with her? Oh, won't it be jolly!"

"You're the dearest girl in creation!" cried

Jean joyfully, "and if we were not in the open street I should certainly hug you!"

Jean looked about as she spoke, and noticed the corner of the street near which stood the Woman's Home she had frequently visited. "Oh, I have an idea! a splendid idea," she exclaimed. "I have thought of the person to put with Mrs. Martin."

Miss Cary laughed. "I suppose so; Mrs. Jennings says that you are always putting two and two together, and making four."

"Does n't everybody?" demanded Jean. "Why do n't you ask me of whom I have thought? There is a young woman named Mrs. Finch; she has twins, a little over a year old now. I was interested in them you know on account of me and John, and her husband is in the penitentiary for ever so many years, and she hopes he 'll never come back. Is n't it a pity for a man to be so bad as that! Mrs. Finch was nearly starved, and the babies had only water in their bottles to suck—think of that! Aunt took them all to the Woman's Rest Home, and then they sent them into the country for three months. When they came back Mrs. Jennings and aunt fixed up a room near Mrs. Lindsay's for them. Mrs. Finch has improved very much, and Mr. Dysart gave her a machine: she attends to her room and her twins just as the nurse and Bible-woman advise her to. Dear Dr. Imlay got her hospital sewing to do regularly, so she earns about five dollars a week. Now if we can get a room next hers for Mrs. Martin, and have her help Mrs. Martin a little by doing her washing, her cleaning, and making fires, Mrs. Martin can help her by taking care of the twins. If that is not enough we 'll pay a little something, so that will help them both."

"Said: done:" exclaimed Miss Cary; "we 'll take up that affair to-morrow, for right after my birthday we are going to the White Mountains to stay until September."

"We are going to the beach week after next, to our cottage, Aunt Prudence and I. While we are gone Mr. Moultrie and Mr. Dysart will look after the doing over of the Gridley houses. When we come home we mean to send the nurse and Bible-woman, Miss Lacy and Lois, and little Aggie Lindsay, to the cottage for two weeks. Why, there is Peter Gess! Louis, stop! I want to speak to that man." Jean signalled to Peter, who, hat in hand approached the carriage step. "I did n't know you worked out here, Mr. Gess."

"Yes, Miss, I have a good job for a month, road-making; it 's better by a quarter-dollar a day than where I was. I bring my dinner an' eat it in yon clump of trees an' flowerin' bushes. Ain't it lovely? I bring the babby out here, and keep him all day."

"Why your baby is only two years old. Won't he run away, or get killed while you are working?" asked Jean.

"He 's mighty sage for his years, Miss; and moreover, I bring along a bit of clothes-line, and tie one end to his waist and one end to a tree; there he plays and plays till he 's sleepy, then drops over for a nap. It 's all shade there. At noon I loose him, and feed him. He 's real happy and pickin' up amazin'. J'rushy starts him off clean as wax, Miss, and you 'd be surprised how many folks stop to speak to him, or give him a cake, or some fruit. Sometimes I find bits of money pinned up in the back of his frock."

The two girls laughed merrily at this description. Jean said,

"I stopped to speak to you about Rufus Hapgood: he 's going wrong again. I 'm afraid he 'll lead off Sime Ridder, too."

"Rufe *is* going wrong," admitted Gess, "but Sime is resisting very firm. I believe the Lord 's dealing with Ridder."

"Can't you help Rufus Hapgood any? He 'll lose all his little business, and go to ruin, I 'm afraid."

"Well, Miss, I runs his eatin'-stand mornings from half-past four to half-past six, and all the evenins, and I gets Rufe back safe every night. I deals out the truth to him. I works for him same as if it was me 'n' pardner."

CHAPTER XII.

AS THE SEA IS FULL OF SHIPS.

> "My little craft sails not alone;
> A thousand ships from every zone
> Are out upon a thousand seas:
> And what for one is favoring breeze,
> Might dash another with the shock
> Of doom upon some hidden rock."

THE summer days lapsed one by one in warmth, light and beauty; rising in glory, filled with fragrance and the ringing matins of the birds, and the reveille of labor; gliding down into the evening's paling gold and deepening gray, with no sound but the slow sweep of the returning tides, the cricket's shrill pipe, or the lonely intermittent cry of the whip-poor-will.

How many hours Jean spent upon the sands! the waters seemed a bond between her and her brother; somewhere on that foam-flecked superficies her brother had his floating home; the very waves that lapped against her hand might one day ripple on the sides of his ship. Oh, John, John! how many a prayer and thought of unfailing patient love those waves might bring you!

There had come a line from John himself, mailed at Para. He was able to walk about the deck. From Bahia another note: he was able to go ashore, but Captain Locke refused him the privilege. From Rio de Janeiro came a third letter: John was ill-pleased enough; he had been sent to share the cabin of the second-mate, a stiff old Scotchman; he was made to mess with this man. From Montevideo came another grumble: still he could not go ashore, and he had been put to work! scrubbing decks, scraping masts, splicing rope, his trick at the wheel! that was nice business for the heir of the Cardiffs! However a postscript said that he had 'gained a lot of flesh, his muscle was getting firm, he was tanned, he slept like a top, he was fearfully hungry, and wished he had something decent to eat.' All this was good news; it made Jean's heart sing for joy.

But then came no more letters from John. How long the weeks were without news! Jean was glad that September had come, so that she could return to town; she seemed there to be nearer news of John. Finally among the shipping intelligence they found an item: the Coral Queen had been spoken off the Falkland Islands, all well on board. More longing and weary waiting; then another item: the Coral Queen had been sighted in the Straits of Magellan, weather very bad, fierce wind and thick snow.

After that, silence—long, cold, hopeless silence: the Coral Queen seemed to have melted among those snow-flakes through which she had gone scudding along. Poor Jean, her life had suddenly taken upon it the nakedness of the desert.

The John Cardiff Comfort Hall for Lads was finished in the basement of the renovated Gridley buildings. Its name in great gilt letters was blazoned in a broad glory above the doors. It was autumn now; the evenings were chilly and long; out of the streets gathered many lads into Comfort Hall; they swung in the gymnasium on bars and ropes, they played at dominoes and checkers, they read magazines and papers, they hung enamoured over "Robinson Crusoe," "Swiss Family Robinson," "Winter in Spitzbergen," "The Young Maroons," "The History of the United States," and other books that had been John Cardiff's, and which he and Jean had read sitting in one big chair together. Other lads about a table, where sat an instructor, studied reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, spelling. All was light, bright, warm, helpful, at the John Cardiff Comfort Hall for Lads, but within the heart of Jean was 'grief and desperate sorrow.'

"There is but one help for you, Jean," said Dr. Yancy to her one day; "hold fast by Him who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. In this time of anxiety and waiting stay yourself on the thought that though so far from each other, you and your twin are equally near to God. When you were babies you cried out after each other, when the nurse had you one on each arm, but having your faces turned from each other you seemed far away and cried. It is so now: the Father in his all-sufficient arm holds you and John."

"We are very anxious about Jean," said Miss Prudence to Dr. Yancy at another time, "as anxious for her as for John; her heart is intensely bound up in John. We fear for her health, and for the reaction upon her eyes, in this sorrow and anxiety. Dr. Imlay thinks her safeguard is her work; if she can keep up her interest in that, and absorb her thoughts in it, or even get herself physically weary in it, so that sleep shall come from weariness—that is her hope."

That night Mr. Moultrie and Mr. Dysart came in about half-past nine; the house was in a half-light and very still; only the low sweet sound of a song came from the library; the two went there, softly. Jean lay on a couch, her head in her aunt's lap. Miss Prudence was softly and steadily stroking the girl's head, and as she did so she sung, while Jean slept to the low music of the song:

> " Ashore, ashore, weariness bringeth balm,
> And tired souls thereby be doubly blessed—
> Ashore, ashore, the Father with his calm,
> Granteth his toilers—rest."

It was a Canadian boat-song that Jean loved. Miss Prudence held up a warning finger; the two men turned away and went on into the Conservatory.

"The poor child sleeps at last," said Mr. Moultrie. "Miss Cardiff reported her as awake nearly all last night. I am almost glad that I have to tell her to-morrow how sick Rufus Hapgood is. Anything to take her mind off John."

"Yes," said Mr. Dysart, "there is nothing that so heals our sorrows as to be a helper of others. There have been times also when I felt overwhelmed with some of those troubles of which we each have our own, and which we all must meet in life, when I have felt strength and calm by going to walk in 'God's acre,' some city of the dead. Moving among the low and narrow beds where all the sleepers lie in such profound rest, I think how short after all was time to them, how immense is the unmeasured existence. I think how all the griefs that to them, lingering here, seemed unbearable, are now lost out of sight—light, forgotten as dead leaves sown on some hurrying stream. I think how each of these narrow beds was made by sorrow, wet with tears, covered in with a heartache; yet all, all these griefs are passed, and earth wheels on unheeding of those who have fulfilled their mortal destiny. What to me, what to others, will soon be my woe or pain, except for its ripening and enriching of the spiritual nature—of myself or of others."

The two men walked among the flowers for a while, silent; then Mr. Dysart said again, "Poor John! poor spoiled boy! He was of all most unfit for a sudden shock of doom—a violent end."

"What! Do you give him up?" exclaimed Mr. Moultrie.

"No; one may fear anything and hope anything from the sea."

The next morning at breakfast Mr. Moultrie said, "Miss Jean, Rufus Hapgood is very sick with pneumonia.'

"He has looked half sick for some time," said Miss Parsons.

"Have they taken him to the hospital?" asked Jean. "I went to see him. He has been doing better, trying to be good, lately."

"But trying as usual in his own strength," said Miss Prudence; "that is the trouble with

Rufus; failure as he is, he never feels his need of God."

"He is not at the hospital," said Mr. Moultrie. "As soon as Peter Gess found that Rufus was sick with a heavy cold he took him to *his* place, and means to keep him there."

"He cannot be half as comfortable or well nursed," said Miss Prudence; "he really should go to the hospital."

"Why, what room is there at Peter's place!" cried Jean. "They have only three rooms; that general room where Jerusha Gess washes, cooks, eats, and two little bedrooms; then they have six children!"

"The oldest boy is gone; he has a place Mrs. Ridder found for him in the country last summer; he went two weeks ago. The next to the youngest sleeps at Mrs. Ridder's in her baby's trundle-bed; Peter Gess gave Rufus the second bedroom, the small one, farthest from the kitchen; and 'Mandy Ridder and Mrs. Gess have made it real comfortable for him. Two of the Gess children sleep in the kitchen, and two in their mother's room on the floor. Rufus has a perfect horror of going to the hospital. Peter is in hopes that if he has him with him he may help him spiritually. Rufus will take more from Peter than from any one else. Peter is perfectly devoted to Rufus; he calls him '*Pardner*.' He and Sime try to run the coffee-stand for him. Peter sleeps on the floor by Rufus' bed, to take care of him nights. I believe the whole Gess family live on half rations to be able to supply the extra fire and lights, the milk and fruit Rufus needs. Oh, sometimes, many times, the poor are good to the poor beyond all words!" Mr. Moultrie watched Jean eagerly; he was trying by this true tale to draw her mind from that one theme—*John*—which had for a fortnight engrossed her. He succeeded.

"Why have I neglected my poor people so!" exclaimed Jean. "Half rations! The Gess family fairly going hungry, and we have enough and to spare! We should provide all that fruit, milk, ice, night-lamp—all those extras."

"They did not tell me they were denying themselves, but what else could it be? Mrs. Gess earns about two dollars a week; Peter never gets over eight, and often six. There are eight to feed, house, clothe on eight or ten dollars."

"They are never behind with the rent," said Miss Prudence; "there is very seldom any one in the '*Cardiff Rents*' or the '*New Rents*' behindhand a day: the people seem to take a pride in being prompt; they make a conscience of it."

"One thing is," said Mr. Moultrie, "in raising the grade of their homes we have raised the character of the people and the quality of their work, so they are less likely to be out of work. We have weeded out the most incorrigible, removed temptation from the weak, so drink and gambling do not absorb the earnings; finally, we are careful to try and help the people to find work. Our little labor bureau has quietly done a great deal for the Kelso Street neighborhood."

"But how much they need to have done!" said Jean; "there are so many of them, all so poor and struggling. I know there is something I can do there every day, and I will do it. Aunt, what was that we read the other day—or, you read and I heard—'With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?' I have been leaving my poor sheep in Kelso Street."

"There is one there longing for you, Miss Jean," said Mr. Moultrie, "old Mrs. Martin. She asks after you every day, and she says so devoutly and earnestly, 'The Lord bless her and give her the desires of her heart,' that I always feel sure that hers are the prayers that will bring down an answer. She said the other day that the coming of you and Miss Cary into her room was like the return of flowers and summer. She is so happy, good old creature, in that little room you young ladies fixed for her."

"It was a fine scheme to put Mrs. Finch and old Mrs. Martin together," said Miss Prudence. Mrs. Finch never knew what a mother was.

Mrs. Martin's two girls died long ago, in early youth; now Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Finch are like a mother and daughter: Mrs. Martin is so helpful in a religious way to Mrs. Finch; Mrs. Finch is so docile and so eager to learn what is right and to do it."

"They are always at the services in our Kelso Street mission-room," said Mr. Moultrie, "on Sunday and prayer-meeting night. I hope Dr. Yancy will succeed in raising money for a chapel, then we can organize a church down there. To be a pastor right down there in those slums, among those poor, ignorant, longing people, is my dearest hope."

"We cannot call them slums long, after a chapel is organized there," said Jean. "The whole character of the place will be changed, and slumdom will move farther down toward the river."

"Then let us pursue it with Chapels, Kindergartens, Comfort Halls, Labor Bureaus, Milk Dépôts, until we crowd slumdom into the river, and wash it away with the other sewage entirely, leaving a city cleansed, 'all her children taught of the Lord, and great the peace of her children,'" added Mr. Moultrie.

"That is a beautiful dream," said Miss Prudence: "the day may come when it will not be all a dream."

"Remeck," said Jean to the butler, "you see to having rice, sago, crackers, lemons, sugar, beef extract packed in a basket, and tell Louis I want the carriage right away. Aunt, I am going to ask Mrs. Dall for a blanket, a night-lamp, and some sheets and pillow-cases."

"Yes; also in my room you 'll find three night-shirts done up in a bundle; I put them there last night. If Rufus wont go to a hospital, we will do our best for him where he is."

Miss Prudence and Mr. Moultrie nodded to each other as Jean left the breakfast-room. Once more the girl was finding her way to safety by the path of sympathy.

At this same hour, after a troubled night, Rufus Hapgood was tossing on his bed, while Peter Gess was bathing the sick man's fevered hands and face in warm water, and Jerusha stood by with a steaming flaxseed poultice to lay upon his chest. Rufus had never been really ill before; he was sick now, alarmed, despairing. How could any one feel so desperately bad as he did and ever be better? He looked at the ministering Peter. His whimsical humor survived amid his misery. "Ring down the curtain," he said; "the play is done, and I 've failed."

"Don't be so triflin', Pardner," implored Peter, tucking down the edges of the poultice and making Rufus wince with the heat. "If you 're goin' to leave us now, Pardner, it is a mighty serious place you 're goin' to, sure, an' I want you to view it in a serious light. I tell you, Pardner, dyin' 's no play-actorin'."

"I 've seen it done, and very well done too, on the stage."

"It 's only well done, Pardner, when its done understandin'ly an relyin' on the Lord, who freely pardons all our sins."

Rufus sighed : "I wish I had my life to live over again."

"What would you do with it, man?"

"I 'd better it. I would n't throw myself and all my opportunities away, and come to die at last like a rat in a hole."

"Better it, would you?" spoke up J'rusha Gess. "I 'll tell you, you would n't better it by a hair's breadth, unless you got the Lord to help you. And if you 'd be willin' to ask his help if you did have your life over again, why do n't you be willing now, with what there is of life left you? Peter dealt out to me Sunday night that story 'bout the thief on the cross, and he was nigher to dyin' than you be. If Peter Gess got religion out a sittin' on a curb-stone, why can't you get it while you 're lyin' here in bed? You can, too, and if you do n't, it' s all because you wont. Ai n't that so, Peter?"

"It 's about the long an' short of it J'rushy," said Peter.

Very rough and ready talk this, but clinched with the works of mercy which are the fruits of the Spirit. Peter Gess commended his faith by his works, which set Rufus to a deep thinking. As he lay in bed there he summed himself up, and found himself no better than that "staff of a broken reed, Egypt, whereon if a man lean it will go into his hand and pierce it." The door was open to the kitchen, Peter, Jerusha and the five children were at their scanty breakfast, very thin tea, very dry bread, infinitesimal scraps of bacon. Rufus spoke. "Peter, my way of life has been, 'as if a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him; and he went into the house and leaned his hand upon the wall, and a serpent bit him." Ah, it 's been from folly to folly."

"Pardner, is that you quoted from the Holy Book?" asked Peter.

"It is so. Bible; Prophet Amos."

"Pardner, I make myself surprised at the amount of that Holy Book you know, not being religious."

"It was literature, man, literature," said Rufus. "You do n't understand that side of it, but I 'm educated. Yes, that book is prime literature, prime. If a man has n't brains enough to see that, why he is not worthy to be called a scholar, scarcely a gentleman."

"Oh, if he ain't the beatin'est, owdaciousest man to go on and talk," said Jerushy, putting her bit of bacon on Peter's plate.

An hour later the Bible Nurse had just gone in to look after Rufus Hapgood, when a boy came in, lugging a basket, a large bundle, and a brown paper, containing about ten pounds of beef fresh from the butcher's. "Miss Cardiff's comin' in to see you, Miss Gess, after 'bout an hour," he said panting.

Jerusha Gess wrung a quart or so of water from the front of her garments, wiped wreaths of soap suds from her brawny arms, and called loudly for the nurse. "I say, nurse, sure as I 'm a livin' woman I guess you 'll find the clean bedding you was wishin' for in this here bundle, come from Miss Cardiff. Look at that there basket, packed full, with that pretty little green shade lamp stuck a top! Ain't that real poetic? Do see that meat! Where 's my big pot? I 'll have half of it on boilin' to onct! It makes my mouth water to see it! Seem's jest as if I could eat a slice raw, I 'm so hungry. Kin I wait tell dinner? Guess I 'll have to."

The nurse took a keen look at the large-boned coarse skinned woman before her. There were hollows in Jerusha's freckled cheeks, her eyes were a trifle sunken, her throat shown by the carelessly half-buttoned gown, was flabby. This woman was underfed, she was hungry; for days she had been taking less food than enough, because Peter and the children were "so sharp set." And now, for these two or three last days, she had been further depriving herself for the benefit of her neighbor—not merely to do him bodily good, but soul good. A very common, homely, ignorant, sloppy, loud-voiced woman, this Jerusha Gess, but as the nurse looked at her there seemed to shine about the ill-combed head an aureola, and its rags of light read, "I was a stranger and ye took me in."

"Sit you down by the oven this minute and dry yourself, Jerusha Gess," said the nurse magisterially. "I 'll finish tending to Hapgood presently. You 're the mother of a family, and you need a little looking after."

She unpacked the basket, cut a thick slice of bread from the beautiful white loaf, buttered it liberally, then spread jam on two soda crackers, made a strong cup of tea and put white sugar therein.

"Now, Mrs. Gess, that you 'll eat before you rise from your chair. After that, as the young ladies is coming back, you clear up this room a bit; pile up the wash clothes in one place, wipe the water from the floor, and put on a clean apron. I 'll get Hapgood in neat order."

The door burst open and a boy almost fell in. "Peck of apples, an' peck of 'taters, for Mrs. Gess."

Jerusha's mouth was full; so was her heart. She held up her hands, a cup of tea in one, a cracker with jam in the other. When the power of speech returned, she exclaimed, "Well, if Miss Cardiff's Christianity is common Christianity, ain't it just the uncommonest kind ever you heard tell of!"

Jean had, soon after leaving home, overtaken her friend Miss Cary, and invited her to go down to Kelso Street with her. After leaving the basket which caused so much happiness, they went to see old Mrs. Martin. The dame was in the room which the two young girls had made comfortable for her. In one corner sat Mrs. Finck's twins, playing with bits of blocks gathered for them by Aleck Lindsay when the Gridley property was repaired.

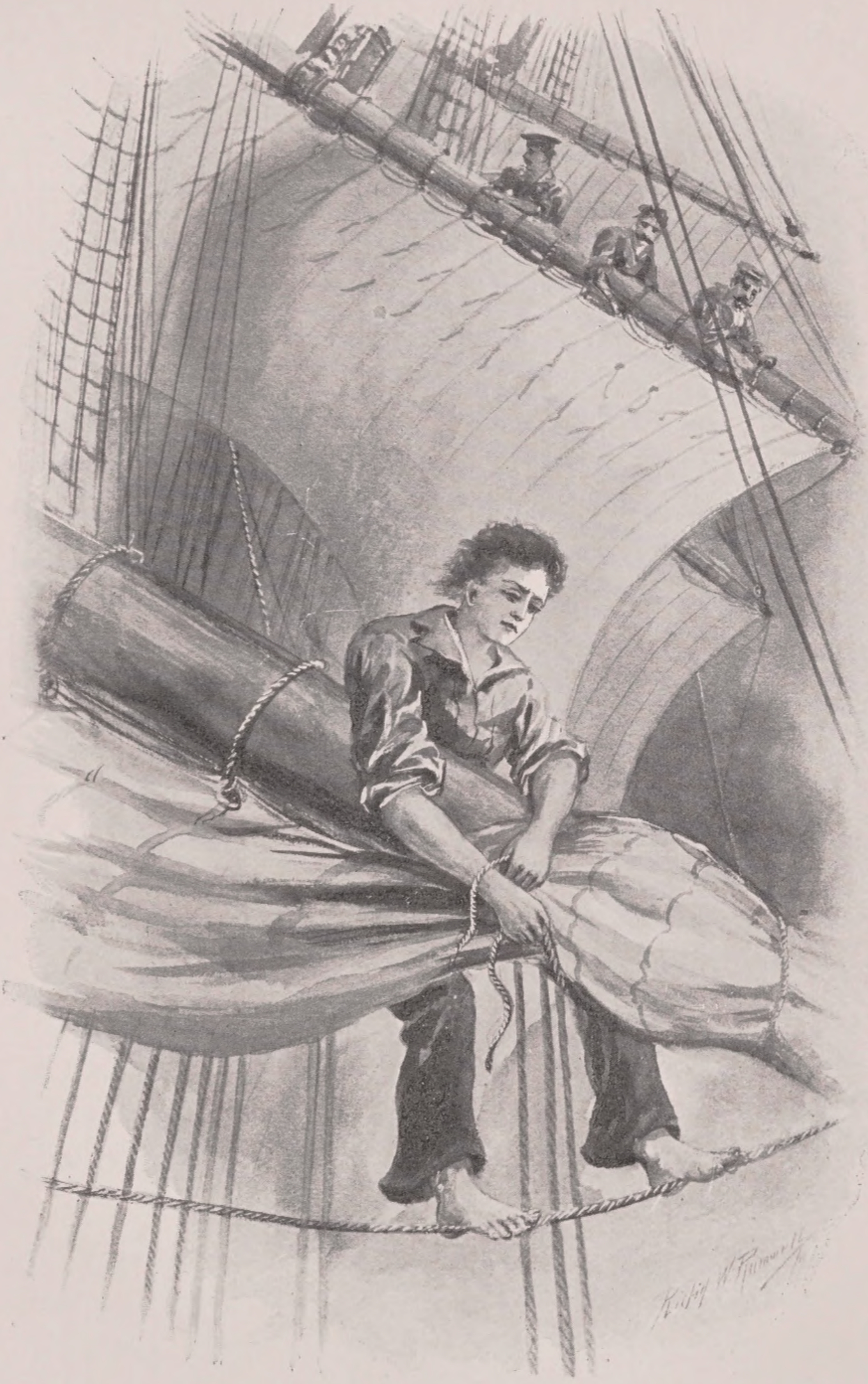
"The mother 's gone to take her sewing back to the hospital," said the old lady. "I 'm mindin' the childer. She helps me, an' I helps her. It 's the way the world gets on, or ought to get on, eh?"

"So it is," said Miss Cary; "and I 'm sure you help by your good example, Mrs. Martin. How could any of your neighbors be slovenly, when you are so clean! Here in your room it is clean in corners and behind doors, and mother says that 's a test."

"Aye, 'the eyes of the Lord are in every place,'" said Mrs. Martin. "When I was a young slip of a girl, I was reading my Bible through, by course as you may say, and I came to where the Lord makes special orders how the camp of Israel must be kept clean, because the Lord walks abroad in it. Then I saw that the Lord demands us to be clean and orderly on His account, and as much at back doors and stairs and in dark bits of closets as out in front steps or fine places. So after that I always tried to have all about me neat and clean, because the Lord is everywhere."

"If you talk like that to your neighbors it should do good."

"Aye, Miss, I talk; but talkin' is small use unless folks lays it to heart. We are all of us far more given to not heeding than to heeding, and the Lord is very patient with us in all our ill mannerly ways!"



CHAPTER XIII.

TWO WOMEN AND A PRODIGAL.

"For 't is sweet to stammer one letter,
Of the Eternal's language—on earth 't is called forgiveness."

WHERE was John? Where was the Coral Queen? Where when the Christmas tide came, where when the New Year dawned upon the earth? Where as the days that had begun to lengthen again followed each other in steady, ceaseless march? Where were the crew of the Coral Queen, where was Captain Locke? The sea is full of ships, but not one of them sighted the Coral Queen, none of them saw her cloud of canvass, a stately pyramid white against the sun; not one saw her scudding by before a gale; the islands knew her not for the sea had claimed its own.

When the Coral Queen left the Straits of Magellan and stood up toward Chiloe Island, John Cardiff, who had at the beginning of the voyage been carried aboard in an almost dying condition, was up, on deck, doing duty as a hand before the mast. He was on common sailor's footing, slept in the forecastle, ate with the other sailors, shared their work. Captain Locke, who when the lad was desperately ill and weak, had nursed him in fatherly fashion, as John strengthened became more and more rigorous, for these rigors were part of the physical and moral cure that was to be wrought in the youth.

John had rebelled against work. "I 'm a passenger; I can pay my way," he sulked.

"This ship don't carry passengers," said Captain Locke, "you were simply a raw sailor, brought aboard sick, as unfortunately many are brought aboard drunk. Work you must, my lad, and no rebelling. I should be sorry to put you in irons; but I sail this ship."

John realized that he was in the hands of an autocrat; the captain of a ship afloat is more absolute a ruler than the Czar of all the Russias.

John did his work, but fretted against the food; he wanted "something decent to eat." Captain Locke smiled drily. "The food seems to agree with you, my lad; go look in the glass in my cabin; you are a heartier looking chap than when you shipped."

John looked: yes, his face was bronzed and well filled out, his shoulders had straightened and broadened, he held up his head and seemed to have grown taller; he was man enough to feel honest pride in his more manly and vigorous appearance.

"I 'm satisfied with the effects of your grub, my boy," grinned Captain Locke; "eat all you want of it."

John wearied of shipboard; he wanted to go ashore, as the others did in turn when they made landings. He wanted to step on dry land in Patagonia. "Go scrape the mast!" roared Captain Locke.

Might he not go ashore at Valdivia or Concepcion? "Scrub those decks!" commanded the captain.

When others had holiday at Valparaiso, John was slung outside the Coral Queen on a board held by ropes, and was re-painting the red and blue stripes above the water-line, also spattering himself grievously with pigment.

Hard lines these for John Cardiff, but they toughened up his fibre bodily and mentally, and when the islands of Juan Fernandez sunk in the eastward wake of the Coral Queen, John was as active, hearty and biddable a seaman as was rated on the vessel. In these days the story of the Coral Queen was as that of Enoch Arden's ship Good Fortune:

> "Yet unvext
> She slipped across the summer of the world.
> Then after tumbling long about the Cape,
> And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
> She passing through the summer world again,
> The breath of heaven came continuously,
> And sent her sweetly by the golden isles

> Onward toward her oriental haven.
> Through many a fair sea-circle day by day,
> Scarce rocking, her full-breasted figure-head
> Stared at the ripples feathering from her bows :
> Then followed calms, and then winds variable ;
> Then baffling, a long course of them : and at last
> Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens,
> Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers!' came
> The crash of ruin and the loss of all."

It could not be told better. There was a day that saw a small open boat containing Captain Locke, John and the Scotch second-mate. There was a day when Captain Locke, having died from injuries received in the storm, was lowered gently overboard by John and the mate, John wishing with all his heart that he had shown more gratitude to that good man who had done so much for him.

There was a day when John woke from a heavy sleep, and found himself of all human beings "the loneliest on a lonely sea." While he slept the mate had disappeared: fallen overboard, or flung himself overboard in delirium. The little boat rolled on the long slow swells of a hot oily-looking sea. There was a keg of water and a bag of biscuit under one of the thwarts covered with a piece of sail; that was all the fortune of the heir of the Cardiffs. An oar stuck upright and bearing Captain Locke's shirt for a flag of distress was a signal which there was no eye to see. There was no wind and the torn shirt wrapped itself idly about the oar. Moaning his horror and despair, John lay over on his face. Something in the fullness of his woolen jersey pressed hard against him. When he and the others had run to grasp something to take aboard the boats, John had been moved by thought of Jean to crowd his mother's Bible in his bosom. He had it there now, his only companion on the great deep.

Despairing as he lay there, the contact of that book drew him into a train of sad and tender memories, and those vague or bitter regrets which attend even the most blameless course of life. How good Jean had always been to him, and how selfish he had been to her! How sorry he was that at Chiloe he had been so cross, because Captain Locke had refused him leave to go ashore, that he had failed to send home a letter! He thought that if he had known that this voyage was to end in his death, known that he was never to see home again, that letter which he mailed at Valparaiso should have been more loving; he would have begged Jean's pardon for the griefs he had caused her; he would have penned the real regrets that lay deep in his heart, the shame, the penitence; surely he would have said that she had done all for him that could have been done, to save him from self. There too, was Aunt Prudence: John had cultivated dislike toward her; but now tossing in this open boat at sea, within an inch of death, how restful and beautiful seemed the orderly, elegant home over which Aunt Prudence so quietly presided; how motherly she had been to him, how patient, how full of good offices! He knew that she loved him and he had rejected her love. John wished that at Juan Fernandez he had written to Aunt Prudence an affectionate, respectful, repentant letter, instead of writing that fretful screed to Mr. Dysart, which finally he had forgotten to mail. John did not know that the Valparaiso letter never reached his sister, and that already time had grown into months since she had heard from him.

Thus John, lying hopeless in his boat, trod the ways of shame and remorse, wished too late that he had made better use of himself, and held converse with approaching death. Darkness fell with the suddenness of the tropic night; cooler winds breathed over the desolate lad's face; he sat up; the sky was sown with stars; that scintillating dome seemed not far away. Of the many who suffer shipwreck how few are the saved; John scarcely recognized a hope of rescue; these waters were so wide, so empty of sails, they had shown themselves so strong. Evidently he must die! What then? He was young, life rebelled in him at the thought of going out so suddenly. Did he wish he had never yielded to come on this voyage? No, he realized that if he had not come, then these many months he would have lain in the family vault, as self-destroyed as any suicide. He had manliness to feel glad that he had come away, had recovered physical tone, and that now if he died, it would be by visitation of God and not by service of the devil. Had John died there at home that last May, now nearly ten months gone, only one epitaph would have served him, "The wages of sin is death."

John breathed deeply and stretched out his arms; he could not remember that he had ever before been so muscular and full of vigor. This physical tone was a good thing to feel, but what mental or moral tone had he recovered in this voyage? The lad was not given to introspection; he had never made any close acquaintance with himself, yet having good brains and being so solemnly set facing death, John began to look at his real self, that inner *ego* which could not perish in these waters. What of that? He realized that his very preference for the death that stared him now in the face, as against that dying of his own reckless courses at home, showed some moral betterment; of late had he been planning to resume his old idle dissipated life when he reached home, or to play the part of a man? Certainly he had meant to live orderly, and within him had risen a healthy disgust for evil. Yes, he was more of a man, more of a decent fellow, he was glad of that; but what of that great future life the sea-gate of which seemed set open so near him, death bidding him enter. Captain Locke, he was a good man, he had shown himself a Christian captain all along; feeling himself dying he had said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and so had fallen peacefully asleep. The mate, too, had been a Christian man; always reading his Bible when at leisure; he had prayed aloud and fervently only last night. Was John good with that fashion of Christian goodness? Ready to die with that fashion of readiness? No; he knew he was not. The mate had prayed for him; he knew that Aunt Prudence and Jean prayed for him daily, fervently; yet in such a crisis as this, surely he ought to do some praying for himself. He had not prayed since he dropped his childish "Now I lay me." What should he pray for? To be rescued, of course, to get home safely, to be allowed to live out his allotted human years, doing a man's work among men.

But suppose that was impossible? It seemed impossible, here in the dark lonely night, silent, but for the lapping of water on the sides of the boat. He must pray also for that soul-rescue, that hope after death, without which he must drop into eternal night. John had not the least thought of ending when he disappeared under these waters; continuous life confronted him, existence was permanent before him, but what kind of an existence should it be? These were terrible thoughts, forced upon John who had heretofore only thought of his pleasures. He searched his mind for some form of prayer, some portraiture of the Being to whom only he could turn in this distress. Who was He, far-off, holy, unseen, wrapped in infinity? This wrecked human creature could not from his lowly distance even touch His garment's hem. Then slowly crept out upon the palimpsest of his mind, overlain so long with the handwriting of folly, but discovered now by close searching, something heard in church or read in story, of a gracious One, in night-blackness and storm, moving along the surface of a restless sea toward a little tossing helpless boat—a presence goodly, majestical, compassionate, walking upon the waters—an agonized human face looking into the blackness, crying, "Lord! If it be thou, bid me come unto thee!"—and the voice that through all the eternities had ruled heaven, said gently, "Come." Here was humanity, divinity, sympathy, power, help. The view of the hitherto unheeded Galilean grew upon John in the night, and stretching forth his arms he cried wildly into the black silence, " Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner !" It was born in upon John's mind that he was not alone: there was an eye that saw him, an ear that heard him, a heart that compassionated him. This consoled him, and after a while in the dark quiet he fell asleep. When the morning came he ate and drank, and found himself calculating how long his little stores would hold out, if used very sparingly.

He took the Bible from his jacket; the book seemed to come to him direct from the hands of his mother and sister. He did not know where to look for anything in the book; he did not know that there was anything especially helpful to find; he just opened the book and read on. But the Lord guides us all; the place where he opened read, " Out of the depths have I cried unto thee; Lord, hear my voice." So he read.

Then, as the sun grew hot, he took two oars and a small sail to make a shelter for his head. When he opened the book again it was in another place: " Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea;" and he read on there. It shortened the hours; the book seemed companionable. Later, he looked over the side of the boat and found that he seemed to be in the midst of a school of little fishes. The mate's cap lay where it had fallen in the bottom of the boat. John used that as a scoop, and caught three fish. The fastidious heir of Cardiff was glad to eat them raw, to save his other food. The coats of Captain Locke and the mate lay in the bow of the boat. John got them to make his place in the stern softer. He felt something hard in a pocket. It was a half-pound tin of chocolate. In the mate's pocket was a big clasp-knife and a handful of dried prunes. These would preserve life for several days. For how many? John remembered that it was now the fifth day since the wreck. He cut five notches on the side of the boat with his knife. Then he went to reading again.

Thus he spent his time: he read, he slept, he mourned over the wrecked past and the wrecked present. His little stock of food and water dwindled away in an alarming manner, while the number of the notches on the boat's side increased and increased and increased. There were at last twenty-one of them. There had been a heavy shower one night; John had caught nearly two quarts of water in the keg and sail; he had also stripped and let the rain refresh his parched, salt-water-roughened body.

Not a ship had passed him, unless in the night when he had no means of showing himself. He had seen, far down on the horizon, some triangular patches; they might have been sails, or they might have been clouds. John was bronzed to the tint of an Indian by the sun; he was shrunken to skin, tendons, and bone from spare diet; he slept much now from exhaustion; he daily expected death, and peace had come into his soul out of the book which he read and from that merciful One who is not far away from any that call upon him. All would be right at last; in the years to come Jean and Aunt Prudence would know what a glad surprise awaited them when they met him in heaven. Now, when John felt sleep coming on, he always thought it might not end in this world, and he whispered, as Captain Locke had, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

One day he woke from long sleep. Was this "that world to come whereof we speak;" this with the green palms and pandanus trees, this having "verdure like a succession of green waterfalls," this lonely "beauty beyond imagination?" No, this was not the land that lies beyond death. John rubbed his eyes and gazed. This was a tiny atoll, covered with vegetation; the waves made a foam wreath upon the outer coral reef. There was an opening like a gate to the still inner lagoon; over yonder earthly fruits grew, and earthly streams rippled toward the silver sands of the shore. John grasped the tiller and steered for his life, directing his boat to that narrow gateway in the reef. There was a little breeze which blew straight toward the island. John made haste to let down one edge of his pavilion, fastening it to a thwart so that it would act in some sort as a sail.

In less than two hours the boat had entered the lagoon, had been hauled up on the glittering white beach; John had found water, and had drunk as if he could never have enough; he had found a cocoanut, he was lying on soft green grass, birds wheeled and cried above his head. Land! Land, dear kindly land! He could not realize in that first flush of triumphant joy that this was land without a human voice or foot but his own, a little beautiful isle, left derelict, far from the traffic of men, far from the sister islands and the mighty continents. It was land, land of soft climate and abundant productions, where

> "It seemed always afternoon;
> All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
> Breathing like one that had a weary dream."

Winter never came in that little island where John had drifted. Where Jean lived, in the far busy North, winter had come and passed, spring had tripped along. John had been gone nearly a year. No one now expected ever to hear again of the Coral Queen or any who had sailed on her, no one but perhaps Jean and Aunt Prudence, who hid in their hearts hopes that they dared not utter. Not very strong hope was Jean's, surely, for she had quietly dropped the little white muslins and ribbons which she had begun to assume after her father had been somewhile dead, and now again her mourning garb clung black and simple about the slender girlish form. Still Jean kept a brave face, and went in and out doing all her work diligently. Her friend, Miss Carey, said to Dr. Yancy, "Is not our Jean wonderful! See how she bears up."

Dr. Yancy replied, "This is nothing else than the mighty power of God; he is holding her by his hand."

A little cloud "no larger than a man's hand," threatening to gather size and blackness sufficient to overshadow much of the good that had been done, was rising on the Kelso Street horizon. Fitzig Street lay next to Kelso, and there a tall, old, very narrow house had one day so far fallen down that its inhabitants camped in the street, and the very rats fled it. The city authorities ordered it taken down, and there was much falling of bricks and other rubbish, much selling and stealing of old lumber, and a marked rise in the sickness and death-rate of the quarter, owing to the filling of the air with diseaseburdened dust, and the uncovering of gorged sewers and drains.

Dr. Yancy and Mr. Moultrie thought it well to buy the lot thus vacated, for their proposed chapel. The building would be small and low, thus affording a breathing place, permitting more light and additional windows for the buildings on each side. They had the other members of their committee to consult after interviewing the agent about the price. All being agreed, Dr. Yancy and Mr. Moultrie returned to settle their purchase. The agent looked confused. "I am very sorry to disappoint you, gentlemen, but Mr. Tubbs has bought that strip of ground. He owns the tenement-house beside it, and he means to build an addition to it on that land."

"I supposed we had the refusal of it for thirty-six hours," said Dr. Yancy stiffly.

"Ah, well, there was no writing in the case; and Mr. Tubbs offered a top price, and owning the adjacent house he really seemed to have a right to buy it if he chose."

"I can see through that," said Mr. Moultrie, as the two went away disappointed, "Tubbs has given him a hundred or so, *douceur*."

As they passed Rufus Hapgood's stall he beckoned them, and said, "I'm afraid you're not going to get that site for the chapel."

"What do you know about it, Rufus?"

"I heard the men talk. The fellows who have been at work tearing down lunched here sometimes. They said Tubbs swore he would n't have any chapel next his house; he was sick of this crusading in the slums; he would fight to the death, from this out, against this petting of the poor, this prayer-meeting, free bath, temperance, front-door-bell, bay-window style of work."

"Oh, that 's it, then! War declared?" said Dr. Yancy.

"To the teeth and knife," said Rufus, slicing cold beef.

A day or two later as Miss Lacy was sewing for Jean, she remarked, "I saw a friend of mine, forewoman in a wholesale millinery store, the other day, and she said she had finally saved up five hundred dollars; and that she meant to invest it down in Fitzig Street. Mr. Tubbs is going to build five stories high on that lot where the house fell, and he means to buy the next one to it. Those houses have been bringing twenty-eight per cent., but he means to make them bring forty or forty-five this year."

"That 's getting your money out of 'the bodies and souls of men,' which the Apocalypse says Great Babylon traded in. Forty per cent. means indecency, epidemic, crime. Rufus Hapgood told Dr. Yancy that there were three thousand people now in that block, and they call it 'Black Maria,' after the prison van, or, 'The Calcutta Black Hole,' those that know enough to call it that," observed Jean.

Miss Prudence went away to a meeting of the Woman's Refuge Committee. Belle Lacy sewed and sighed. There were so many unbreathed sighs in Jean's heart that she was tender to such sounds as these.

"What is wrong, Miss Lacy? Is Lois not so well?" she asked. "Is your new home uncomfortable? Are you still with the Johnsons?"

"Lois is not sick," said Miss Lacy, "but I know she will be. We have changed our house so much for the worse, Miss Jean! That one on Tenth Street suited us so well; in a little, sunny nook, quiet and old-fashioned; you know what a nice, bright little garden place we had for Lois to work over flowers in. That was beyond all price to me. The doctor says that plenty of out-of-doors life is Lois' only hope. Lois is such a splendid hand with flowers, I thought we might work on to training her for a florist. The Johnsons had to leave; the house was wanted to make room for a big store. I had to keep with the Johnsons: a girl and a feeble child need be particular where they live, and the Johnsons are so good to Lois all day when I am gone, I feel safe about her. This new place is in a quiet, respectable neighborhood, and the rent suits, but there is very little sun, only two hours or so a day; and what is worse, no garden-spot. There is one tree on the sidewalk near the door, but how can poor Lois sit there idle all day! I feel so sad for the little feeble creature, deprived of her garden just as spring has come on." A tear or two fell on Miss Lacy's work.

Jean felt grieved for Lois too. Jean loved flowers passionately; the conservatory, the banks of flowers in the garden, were her delight; at their farm or whenever she went to the mountains or seaside, the woods and the flowers were as precious friends to her. She sympathized in Lois Lacy's infatuation for gardening.

"Tell me, is there no garden-spot, no space at all?"

"Nothing but a cold, north corner, shut in on two sides by the house, and by the picket-fence on the other two. It is about fifteen feet square, damp all the time; grass will not grow there, nothing grows but a crop of plantain."

"No sun at all? Not a ray?" urged Jean.

"Well, at noon there is about an hour of sun, and from six to eight in the morning. I suppose it changes a little as the year changes;

but that is about what there is. I wish you could see that useless, ugly, dark, cold, barren, north corner! Dismal, dreary, North Pole and Sahara combined!"

Jean leaned back in her little white rocking-chair and fairly laughed aloud at Miss Lacy's tirade. All in black in the white rocker with its white satin cushions and ribbons, Jean looked a sweet harmony in black and white. Miss Lacy glanced over at her and said to herself, "Well, she's rich and has all she wants; the world has always gone well with her; no wonder she can laugh." Miss Lacy forgot that matter about John, and that Jean's heart was always drowned in tears for him.

"Dear Miss Lacy," said Jean, "there never was an ugly, barren, cold, desolate spot that could not be made beautiful and useful if the right things were put into it. 'God has his plan for every man,' and he has vegetation even for cold north corners. God has plant-children that will grow there and nowhere else. There never was a cold, bleak, dreary, bitter north corner of a heart, dear Miss Belle, which could not be made to bring forth the fruits of charity, mercy, and peace, if the right hands planted the right things in the right way. Common-sense works with the tools it has. We have Lois needing a garden to work in, and you have only a north corner for a garden. Let us see what can be done with that! Is the corner bare earth or paved?"

"There is a little pavement about the hydrant that stands there. Poor Lois looks at her hoe, rake, spade, and trowel with tears in her eyes. Well, it can't be helped."

"You're too gloomy and despairing, Miss Belle. Cheer up, and get on with your sewing. I'm going to call on Lois and see that cold north corner which you so feelingly describe."

Jean was gone a number of hours. "Lois and I drove about in my coupé, and we had lunch at a restaurant," she reported on her return.

"I know that made her happy; but isn't the north corner all I said it was?" exclaimed Miss Belle.

"'I came, I saw, I conquered,'" smiled Jean. Grappling successfully with a difficulty had cheered her. "I left Lois very happy, digging up plantain. I took her a thick, little square rug, which Mrs. Dall has sent to the garret, that will keep her from getting cold. I bought two light boards, twelve feet long, had them nailed V-wise with a support at one end and little wheels. That is for watering the north corner when it is full of flowers. Wheeled under the hydrant, one end resting near the house wall where the earth is highest, the stream will irrigate all the ground as it finds its way back to the drain in the brick pavement. I bought two boards to lay for paths for Lois to walk upon, dividing her north corner into beds. Mrs. Johnson gave us three little boxes, which Lois is to paint red and set upon bricks, for growing vines in. Mr. Johnson supplied some tough hoops from old barrels, and Lois is to break these into lengths and make a basket-work border for her flower-beds."

"But what can you grow in those flower-beds, Miss Jean?"

"In the boxes we are to have inch-plant, tradescantia you know, and money-wort; they like shade. When the plantain is all out, and Mr. Johnson and Lois have made the earth fine, we mean to plant lilies of the valley, verbena, a pair of big fuschias, violets, garden valerian, and heliotrope. These I have ordered at a florist's. Then Lois and I are going to drive out to the woods, for a day, taking Mr. and Mrs. Johnson; then we shall bring back no end of ferns, arum, bath-flowers, crane's-bill, all kinds of sweet wild flowers that love the moist shade and fear the sun. Oh, there are plenty of flowers that thrive best in shade and moisture. Lois is going to create a little paradise out of her north corner! It shall be a paradise to us too, above the lonely, uncared-for, cold, north corner hearts."

"I know poor Lois is nearly wild with joy!" said Belle.

"Yes, to-day is a golden milestone in her life."

"I 'm glad God made you rich, Miss Jean!" cried Miss Lacy impulsively, "you are as generous as the sun!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE YOUNG MAN'S MODEL.

> "Whom soft-eyed pity once led down from heaven
> To bleed for man, to teach him how to live,
> And oh, still harder lesson, how to die!"

MR. TUBBS' house on Fitzig Street sprang up like a mushroom or like Jonah's gourd. Its five stories shut out the light and air of heaven from many a heavy-hearted wretch who "did not so much as know whether there be a heaven." There were rooms with windows opening upon foul stairways, rooms opening their windows upon dead walls four or five feet distant; there were rooms having neither door nor window except such as opened on another room. There was no attempt made to rent such rooms to one family. The inner room might be rented to some other family or even to single men, and these of known riotous and drunken character. If widows, girls, single women complained to the agent of such leasing and trespass, he leered at them, asked if "for their miserable rent money they expected the earth," and added that "they must be badly off for complaint to make a fuss about nothing."

One such inside room was rented to a very unruly drunkard, the outer room being the home of two unmarried Polish sisters. These women, keeping starvation at bay with their needles, kept under their one straw pillow a huge knife of a razor-like sharpness. If in some night of darkness the cry of "murder" had rung out and this knife had been found piercing the drunkard, Mr. Tubbs' agent would have thrown up his hands, appealing to Providence and the general public as to *why* the poor classes had such ungovernable dispositions. No doubt many of the general public would have asked the same question.

Mr. Tubbs and his agent were of one mind about renting. "Crowd them in; double them up; they 're all the same as rats." Said Mr. Tubbs, "These church people round here, who spend their time in pampering the poor, like Scripture so well, let 's give it to 'em. Crowd 'em in, 'good measure, filled up, pressed down, shaken together, running over;' that 's in the Bible, ain't it, or something near it? Let 'em have it."

And eyes that were anointed to see—angels' eyes, for instance—unless they were tear-blind, saw these houses becoming great nurseries of crime and sorrow.

The summer came; people with comfortable homes felt that they must leave the city to preserve health; people with uncomfortable homes were obliged to stay and endure. Jean thought on these things as she went about among the people around Kelso Street, making what plans she might for their comfort before she left them. Beautiful is summer when one can seek her on the cool mountains, among the flower-sown meadow lands, or by the solemn splendors of the sea; but summer sweeps down like the Valkyr on those who gasp and scorch in the tenement-houses. There must be tenement-houses and people who live in them, and they must be in the crowded streets of the town, because the workers who dwell in them must be near their work. Given all these "musts," it is only humanity to make the tenements as healthy and comfortable as is possible.

Said Jean to Jerusha Gess, "I am going to send a dozen little children, and one or two mothers who are feeble, out into the country. I wish I could send you all out."

Jerusha laughed her loud, cheery laugh. "Oh, miss, what 'd ever the men do for food an' washin' an' mending up, if we women was all gone? An' if we went, men an' all, like Peter was readin' t'other night those Israel folks went to the wilderness, why whatever 'd the city do for work, or whatever 'd we do for livin' next winter? Don't you fret about us, miss; we 're well off in your houses compared to most. So long 's we do n't have to tumble over drunken men lyin' asleep in hallways; so long as we have water enough laid on, an' drains as is n't clogged, and so long as we 've winders an' doors enough, we 'll do. Did you hear what a dretful thing happened las' night over in Tubbs' house in Fitzig Street? A woman there, these hot times, in a ten-by-fourteen room, with two beds in it an' a stove, hed three men to cook for—her husband, her brother, an' a boarder. She hed a baby six months old, and it was sick, as you 'd s'pose it could n't help bein', she havin' to keep fire up in that little crowded room. So last evenin', about ten, she sets down side the winder, an' holdin' the baby in her arms, lays it on a bit of a piller on the winder-sill to give it a breath of air an' see if it 'ud stop moanin' an' sleep. So by-and-by it did, and by-and-by, bein' it was her first chance of rest for many hours, she dropped off too, an' slep' so hard, the baby she let loose of it unknowing whatever, an' it fell, fourth story it was, an' lay dead on the walk, an' there the father an' the other two, comin' home latish an' drunk, stumbled over it an' carried it up, she still sleepin' on till they shook her awake, poor soul! That 's the way babies an' women has to take it. Did I tell you, miss, my Samson as is livin' out in the country, and Bella

Lu that Mis' Jennings got a place for, them two is savin' every cent to get me a gasoline stove, so I wont have it so hot in here summers; an' me an' Peter we reckons we can buy gasoline now there 's two less mouths to fill. Wont it be nice? It 's them blazin' hot stoves what does it summers, dear knows."

The Bible nurse was passing the door and heard this last remark. "Yes, indeed," she said, "the stoves are terrible; they burn and scorch nights in little rooms where babies or sick people are lying. They cause plenty of disease. But, Miss Cardiff, these dreadful rough, broken, sewer-filled pavements are the cause of much more disease. If the streets could only be repaved!"

"My aunt, Mr. Moultrie, Dr. Yancy, Dr. Imlay, Mr. Jennings, and the others, are busy about that now; they are trying to get the city to pave these streets, Kelso, Fitzig, Greble, and the others, especially the courts. Mr. Tubbs is fighting hard against it; he says it 's a shame to spend the city's funds paving streets that nobody enters."

"Nobody! That block of his is the most crowded place in all the city! Nobody! More people go on these very streets than on any other streets of the city," cried the nurse.

"That is what he was told. Last night our parlors were filled with gentlemen who are interested in repaving these very crowded streets. The mayor of Allegheny says that nothing had so helped the health, cleanliness, and thriftiness of his city as repaving the courts, alleys, and tenement-house streets. He said the women scrubbed the asphalt as if it were a parlor, and then scrubbed their steps, floors, windows, children, and themselves to match. I hope, nurse, we'll see all these streets well paved before long, Mr. Tubbs to the contrary-"

The Bible woman came up with some one's baby in her arms. "Miss Cardiff, is n't it a shame that the city has not building laws to control such abuses as that terrible barracks of Mr. Tubbs that they call the Black Maria? I cannot begin to tell you of the crimes and miseries of that place. I said right out to the agent when I met him last week, 'That 's a nuisance that ought to be abated.' I said, 'I think there should be a law of limitation for such crowding of houses. It 's a crime!' And he laughed out, and says he, 'There 's no statute of limitations for crimes, my good woman. If that 's a crime it can't be *limited*, and it 's not likely to be abolished.' So I says to him, 'Mark my words, the Lord will take you and that block in hand yet, and Mr. Tubbs too. You 'll see.'"

All these affairs and discussions, all these efforts to better the lot of such fellow-creatures as she found in her way of life, made life livable to Jean even in this dreadful loss of her dearly-loved twin. The cries of suffering humanity echoing in her heart sometimes stifled that longing cry for her John.

John was still there on his island. Palms and bread-fruit trees waved above him; green earth was under his feet: he had woven a booth to live in; around his island lay a still blue lagoon, in whose shallow waters were beautiful living things; beyond the lagoon broke a white wreath of foam, that sometimes sighed, and sometimes chanted, and sometimes crashed like thunder, if the winds rose high; beyond the reef with its pounding waters was the wide mocking sea. John had found in the pocket of Captain Locke's coat a pencil and a little note-book. He daily made a line of record of his stay. On the fly-leaf of his Bible he wrote a note to Jean and Aunt Prudence. Some time, when he was dead, these notes might be found and carried home to set at rest the unquiet of his friends, he thought.

As for dying, however, there was not much like it in John's case; he had good air, plenty to eat; he was no more the slim, soft-muscled, nervous, irritable lad; he had broadened and grown, his muscles were knit like steel, he was straight, active, hardy, bronzed, a young athlete. Only the penetrating eye of love, like Jean's, would have known John now.

How often God has led into the wilderness the souls he loves, to speak comfortably unto them, to educate them, to give them their vineyards from thence. Moses lived long in the Midian deserts, and Samuel for twenty years was moulded in solitary companionship with God. David abode for years in the mountains, and John Baptist in the desert. The path into solitude is the path many have trodden. John Cardiff got his best schooling there. He had silence, time, his Bible. Death, who had sat staring at him on the thwart of the jolly-boat, had given way now to an accusing presence—his past. That inexorable past challenged him, pointing out his every footprint, as he had trodden his reckless selfish way, and John, unable to escape the lesson set him, gazed at it day by day, and hated and abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes.

So he was three months upon the island.

One day he had fallen into a heavy sleep. He lay stretched out under some palm-trees beside a spring, a large spring, the only one upon the island. John kept near that spring, for there were signs there which suggested that sailors knew the place, and came to it to renew their supply of water. So, as he lay asleep that day, a shout aroused him. He opened his eyes; there were three sailors about him. To John, over three months shut out from the sight of humanity, these three sailors appeared as angels. If they were angels, however, they were fallen angels, and emissaries from the pit of perdition. A fourth sailor sat in a little boat where were two water-casks, a fifth was examining John's boat, the jolly-boat of the Coral Queen, drawn up upon the sand. John had been thinking of late that he must make some provision of food and water for a trip, and put to sea again in that boat. Now here were men, sailors, and lo, their ship rocked gently on the water, just outside of the entrance to the lagoon.

These sailors were English, Irish, German, a French Canadian, and a man from Maine; the sound of the English tongue, albeit very roughly spoken, was sweet as the mocking-bird's falling song on the ear of John Cardiff. Here were friends, helpers; here lay the way to home, to Jean!

The men were from the barkantine Kittyhawk, from Nova Scotia, homeward bound after a two-years' cruise of general trading. John, having no luggage, was easily transferred to the vessel. While the men filled their water-casks, John loaded his jolly-boat with cocoanuts and other fruit, and it was taken in tow by the yawl of the Kittyhawk. Thus John Cardiff returned to the busy ways of men.

"What 's that?" shouted the captain of the Kittyhawk as he watched his yawl's return.

"Shipwrecked feller, an' his boat," shouted some one.

"Well, captain, I 'll have you to thank for a passage home," cried John, joyfully clambering to the deck of the Kittyhawk.

"You will, will you? Now that 's cheek! Nothin' for nothin' 's my motto," quoth the captain of the Kittyhawk. "However, as I 'm a hand short, an' you look a likely foremast hand, I 'll carry you along."

"As for that," said John, "I can easily pay you for my passage home, as soon as you land me; I happen to be rich."

The captain broke into a loud guffaw, and remarked that he 'heard ducks.' "You look like a bloated millionaire, you do," added the captain. "What 's them breeches worth, and do you call them patent-leather boots?"

John saw that he had erred vehemently in boasting, when there was only his word to go for what he had. The barkantine, the captain and crew were terribly dirty and rough, and John had been heartily calculating at least to get home as a passenger. The captain, however, looked sneeringly at him; the men, taking their cue from the petty tyrant of the Kittyhawk, roared with laughter.

"At least," said John, "my jolly-boat is a good one, and worth something as payment for passage."

"Do you suppose, you idiot, that I'm going to pay for a jolly-boat picked up derelict? Finding's keepings; especially at sea. Ho, there, you rascals, we can't stop all day talking with this beggar gentleman. If he don't like my terms, row him to his island, but bring back the jolly-boat for your trouble. Come now, tumble in, my lad, or go to your place as foremast hand."

John plucked up his courage to reply, "Well, captain, if that's your decision I must make the best I can of it."

Bad enough the best was. This crew seemed made up of the very off-scourings of their respective nations: filth, profanity, indecency, brawls, brutality, were the order of the day. The captain set the tune to this key, and all the rest sung after him. John thought the ship's name should have been Pandemonium. The owners of the barkantine must have been men of the same ilk, content to gather up the dregs of seafaring men for the sake of serving worse pay and worse and scantier rations than other men would ship for. The food was simply abominable.

John looked back to the exquisite cleanliness of the Coral Queen, the carefully cooked wholesome food, the cheerfulness, the kindliness; no quarrels, no oaths, as much rest on Sabbath as could be secured, and a Sabbath service read by Captain Locke: a library for the crew, kind attention for any one who was sick or injured; the captain an autocrat, but a genial fatherly autocrat, humanely interested in all who sailed with him. Well, the good captain, the staunch ship, and all that kindly crew lay in the Pacific's depths, and John, sole survivor, was in this floating horror the Kittyhawk. One night as he stood his watch, counting how many days it would be before land and home would greet him, he wondered if this Kittyhawk were not the most horrible place on earth; then his mind reverted to what his aunt and sister had said of the horrors of some tenement-houses, of those very houses against whose betterment he had fought so bitterly. Surely they were worse than the Kittyhawk, because around the ship blew the strong, pure, life-giving breezes of the sea; she had pure air, they had none!

John may have begun to hate sin for sin's own hatefulness, to be penitent for his past; but here in the Kittyhawk for him sin verily became the cure of sin: the serpent healed the serpent's bite; for oh what infinite unutterable disgust this rampant vice around him wrought in his soul! 'Sick of sin': John knew all the rest of his life what that meant. The ship was a moral sewer, in which he was plunged head deep all those terrible ninety odd days: how his soul cried out for purity, for reverence, for quiet, for peace, for goodness.

Physically too he suffered. Had it not been for those two coats, of Captain Locke and the mate, John might have frozen going through the Magellan Straits; but one coat he wore over his own jumper, the other he traded for a pair of trowsers. When the Kittyhawk began to run up toward the equator it was hot enough; finally after passing the latitude of the Carolinas, it was cold again, for now November had come.

During these days that Bible was his one comfort; it kept his heart up to count how each lapsing day set him nearer the land of his desire, and then, better still, those blessed words seemed as clean waters, washing from his mind the iniquity that on every side rained upon him. Seeing his love for his book, and his reading in spare hours, his mess-mates agreed to take it from him. John, however, was physically and mentally alert; he was on his guard, and he was no longer a weakly lad.

"Heave that wad of paper overboard, or I 'll do it for you," commanded the chosen emisary, while his mates looked on in high glee.

"Let me alone, and I 'll let you alone, mate," said John.

"Pitch it over, I say!" cried the sailor, springing forward.

Then that sailor lay on his back, on the deck, seeing queer things like fireworks above him, and John read on. A second sailor dashed up, but John recalled a lesson of Mr. Moultrie's, which once he had not had muscle to make available. It was available now, and the second sailor, falling upon his comrade, found a softer place to strike, and fewer stars sparkled about him. When the third sailor was added to this collection, there seemed to be quite a little heap of sailors, and John's temper was up. His book was tucked in his bosom, and both fists being doubled, he squared away, prepared to defend the gospel of peace by act of war, as has happened at other times in the world's history.

"Come on!" he shouted, "Come on!" A loud guffaw from the captain, called attention aft. The captain enjoyed a scrimmage among his men, as some wretches enjoy cock or dog fighting. After that, John was let alone openly, but a hundred little hateful tricks played upon him made him long for the passing of each day.

Well, they were in port at last. From this very port John, surrounded by cares and business, had been carried away more likely to die than to live. He came again, big, brown, brawny, beggared, ragged. He had not a nickel to pay a street-car fare; his shirt and socks were gone, his bare toes stuck out of his yawning shoes. He asked the captain for pay, with the rest; he had done hard service for three months.

"Your pay!" bellowed the captain. "Who signed any articles with you? What did I agree to give you! It's time you were thanking me for your life, not asking me to pay for the privilege of saving you. The voyage is n't done yet, either."

Then John considered that he might be thankful to get safe ashore as soon as possible. He could walk home, and what did he the prodigal, deserve better than to go back barefooted and in rags? Lo, he reaped what he had sown! He rushed across the gangplank and disappeared up the dock. Shame suggested narrow and back streets, as his course home; he did not realize that he was so changed that his nearest friends would not recognize him; only the keen eye of love could see John Cardiff in the burly, ragged sailor. He thought of what Naomi had said, "I went out full, and came home empty." Was that true of him? No: he went out the first day an empty husk of a man, and had come back blessed with the indwelling power of God. Poor? Miserable? No, no! life lay before him fair and inviting, and he had learned how to live! He went on buoyantly. Passing a small neat house, in a quiet street there was a window open, and some one was singing to the accompaniment of an unusually fine piano. The rich tones of the instrument and the full sweetness of that contralto voice stayed John's steps for an instant:

"For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,
And lead us to victory again and again."

Then, either that the singer loved the song, or that there was some greater depth and sweetness yet to be attained, the strain resounded again gloriously:

"For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,
And lead us to victory again and again."

John took that with him as his pledge of help from heaven.

He was coming home—coming to lead a new life, to serve God and his fellows! He had been in a hard school, but he had learned the lessons that are worth learning. So he went on. The afternoon was waning; it was Indian summer of the most golden beauty, and the city lay transfigured in a yellow haze. He turned the corner nearest home.

Yes; now he saw his home after long tossing on the seas.

"The pilot of the Galilean Lake" had led him well! At the door stood the family carriage, and the well-known bays; Louis held the reins. On the threshold Aunt Prudence, clad in black; on the upper step a taller and a statelier Jean, also in black. How his heart cried out to her; his eyes seemed to hold her, he made a brisker step forward. Jean, drawn by the subtle power of love turned; she darted down the steps, along the pave, clasped that unkempt, tatterred wayfarer in her strong young arms, and hugged him to her faithful heart. At that moment it seemed as if neither earth nor heaven had more nor better to offer Jean!

It was the inimitable old story retold. There was the ring for the hand and the best robe, the shoes for the feet. There was wild hurrying in the Cardiff household that day; the servants dashed hither and yon; the barber, tailor and bootmaker came in hot haste; the kitchen was all astir to prepare a feast; the little page-boy was dizzy with errands; and Jean through the telephone summoned Mr. Dysart, Dr. Yancy, Dr. Imlay, to welcome John. Then with notes of joy such as seldom ring over telephone wires, told this one and that one—Mrs. Jennings, Miss Cary, dozens more, the joyful story.

"This my brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

"John," said Jean, looking at her brother, "What did it?"

"Jean, I had no human being near me, only God and his Book. There in the book I found The Young Man's Model. One so noble and so gracious as made all else poor and mean compared to him, the guilty and lost sinner's friend. His redeeming work suited my case. His inviting voice called me. His character grew upon me day by day, and finally God stamped a little of it in my heart."

CHAPTER XV.

THE FALL OF THE BASTILE.

> "The sword
> Of Michael, from the armory of God
> Was given him, tempered so that neither keen
> Nor solid might revert that edge: it met
> The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
> Descending, and in half cut sheer."

As in years past Jean and John had sat in the library hanging over one book, enraptured with the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, so now they sat again hour after hour in the library, absorbed in the rehearsal of the fortune of that Crusoe of the house of Cardiff—who had come home after shorter probation. For several days nothing else could be thought or talked of.

Then what Aunt Prudence and Jean had done came in question, and the JOHN CARDIFF COMFORT HALL for lads was described. This brought tears to John's eyes. How unworthy he had been of all Jean's tender love, and valiant faith in him!

"I will be worthy of you, Jean, and the best helper in your work that ever a sister had. It is time I was doing something worth while, if I do not want to play the fool over again. Now we are eighteen."

Yes, they were eighteen, for John had come home on their birthday.

"We will go down Kelso Street way, and see all that has been done," said John. "After that, if Mr. Moultrie will be my tutor again I 'll study hard three or four hours a day, and spend the rest of my time helping you for a couple of years. After that, some solid business. I once read something like this, 'Blessed be the man who makes two blades of grass grow, where was but one before,' and I suppose that holds good of making increase in any of the useful and needed things of this life."

"It is well that one of us is going to know something," said Jean. "I feel as if I had had to grow up desperately ignorant, for two years and a half I have scarcely touched a book."

But the knowledge of the world does not come from printed books. Jean had been making deep studies in human lives and hearts; she had conversed with the educated and carefully cultured, and there were few girls fuller of general information, thinking higher thoughts, more gracious in presence, and more clear and elegant in expressing thoughts than Jean.

"Jean," said John anxiously, "are not your eyes better? Is this always to be so, my dear?"

"The doctor expected them to be all right before now," said Jean; "they will be well soon, now you have come home. I did not give my nerves a fair chance you see; I was so unhappy about you, and I could not tear my thoughts from you. I cried, John."

"You shall not cry over me any more, dear; if I begin to distress you again Jean, I only hope some one will do me the favor to chop off my head! I should deserve it."

"John, my misery about you makes me think of some talk I had once with Mr. Dysart and Dr. Yancy; they were here to tea, and Dr. Yancy speaking of you, of our uncertainty about your fate, said much of the sorrow in this world sprung from ignorance. I see it to be so now. If I had known how you were improving in mind and body; if I had seen you safe on that lovely island, being led and taught of God—if I had known you were coming home, how satisfied I should have been, my John! Dr. Yancy said that ignorance of the true condition of some persons had caused their friends and lovers great sorrow. Then he called up instances from the Bible. Jacob thought that Joseph was dead, and he made up his mind to go down unto the grave to his son, mourning. Mary Magdalen was weeping over a dead Christ, when he had reached resurrection glory, and all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth. If we had faith enough to feel certain that God knows all and is doing all for the very best, then we should not have our hearts aching with wasted sorrow, the sorrow born of ignorance!"

"You and I have come to know more about the Bible, Jean, you by hearing it read to you, and talked about with you, and I by being shut up to its sole companionship."

"Here 's the carriage, Mr. John," said Remeck, who made every excuse he could for an errand to John, and who could not enough feast his eyes on the lad he had known for so many years. John's size, strength, and adventures filled Remeck with joy.

John and Jean set off toward the Kelso Street region, laughing as they went, over Remeck's stately announcement of John's little dog-cart as a "carriage."

"Stop a minute, John," said Jean, making a signal to a passing country-wagon. "There 's Paul; I want to speak to him. Oh, Paul, how is that little boy I sent out to your mother?"

"The one with the rickets, or the one that had the fall?" questioned the young countryman, with a covert smile.

"Oh, yes; there were two of them. Well, I hope your mother did not feel that I was imposing on her by sending too many. How are they both?"

"They 're doing fine. That one with the

rickets is nearly well. All he wanted was plenty of milk, and scrubbing, and a place to run. He 's the most industrious little chap: he picks up chips all day, thinks it 's fun. My, how I used to hate it! That other one is fatting up fine. Sings like a lark. Dad 's so stuck on him I reckon he 'll try and keep him for good. Oh, you need n't be afraid of over-taxing mother with the little chaps; she likes them. I started early and took in the last load of our apples to Kelso Street. I drove through Fitzig Street first, and the folks there looked so miserable and haggard, I dealt out most of the apples to them, and Kelso Street got precious few."

"I 'm glad if you did anything to cheer those miserable people in the Tubbs block," said Jean; "it makes me sick to think of them."

"Who 's that?" queried John, as they drove on.

"Paul Bates. His people live on our farm. Mrs. Bates has been the kindest about allowing me to send out to her feeble women and children to recruit. There is one there all the time, I think; she says it is her only way of doing a little work for God. Those apples he spoke of are the surplus crop. A number of us persuaded several farmers to send their surplus apples, the second best, the windfalls, here to the city to the poor, instead of sending them to the cider-mills, and it has done so much good. The people, especially the women and children, needed the apples, but could not buy anything that seemed like luxuries. We must stop and speak to Rufus Hapgood. Do you remember him? He has improved very much. He had a long attack of pneumonia, and Peter Gess took care of him. Peter helped Rufus to be better. Sometimes I think Rufus must be converted, he is so changed. Jerusha Gess tried so hard to help Rufus that she improved herself. I am sure nothing but conversion would have made her orderly; and now she is orderly, at least, rather so."

"I remember Rufus," said John, "I used to throw him money."

On this occasion John threw no money to anyone, but seemed more welcome than when he did. He jumped out of the dog-cart, shook hands with Rufus, received frankly his congratulations upon his return, said that some day he meant to go down to Comfort Hall and tell the lads all about being shipwrecked, with life on a desert island, and he hoped Rufus would be there. Then he added that he meant to take hold and help his aunt and sister in their work, and hoped Mr. Hapgood would give him some points, for he remembered that he was a keen observer."

Having thus shown that he was not lacking in the tact shared by Miss Prudence and Jean, John jumped into the dog-cart and drove on to Comfort Hall.

On the steps he found Sime Ridder. He shook hands with Sime. "I thought of you on that rat-infested tub, the 'Kittyhawk,' that I came home in," he said, "and wished you were on board for my sake, but not for your own. My aunt tells me you are keeping these houses of ours rat-free. What do you think of this Comfort Hall that has my name? I want to make a real good thing of it; but I shall make plenty of mistakes unless some one who knows the lads here will give me a hint or two." Then he and Sime went into the gymnasium-room, and John performed a few feats with an iron bar so that Sime was filled with admiration. John was meeting him not as "a swell meets a slummy," but as man meets man, in frank fashion: he did not toss him money, but spoke to him honestly. So John was forgiven and admired by Sime, as he had been by Rufus. Youth is always very readily forgiven when it takes to better courses. All the world seems to be watching to welcome the return of youth that has "come to itself."

The next affair was to drive over to see Mrs. Lindsay. The Baby's Milk Dépôt had grown, and now occupied a basement front room, adjoining Mrs. Lindsay's. This place had been nicely renovated, and shone with paint, calsomining, and scouring. There were dozens of clean bottles, two big refrigerators, a plenty of sterilized milk. A rosy, neatly-dressed girl was near the window, embroidering a screen in gold thread. Two other frames of embroidery, covered with tissue paper, stood in a corner. There were some pots of plants about, and a certain suggestion of a presence that loved pretty things. Jean looked through the window, then waved her hand to the girl.

"Oh, Bessie! How is your screen coming on?"

The girl ran to exhibit her work, which was exquisite.

"I 've another ordered," she said, "and that cushion is done. Shall I bring it out to show you?"

"Yes, do," said Jean. So Bessie Lowther ran back for her other frames; but stopped to serve out three bottles of milk. Meanwhile John and Jean waited in the dog-cart.

"That is Bessie Lowther, the girl you and I picked up starving on the street and brought here," said Jean.

"That! I would n't have thought it," said John, "not that I had anything to do with bringing her here, only to growl at you for taking the trouble."

"She worried us terribly for a while, because we did not understand her," said Jean; "she was just hungering and thirsting after beauty and what she called 'gentility.' Helen Cary was the one who helped her: she understood her and got into sympathy with her at once. She dressed her up, invited her to her home, roused her ambition, lent her books—books on dress, good manners, conversation, and art needlework, mind you. She had her taught embroidery of all kinds, and Bessie took to it in a wonderful way. She 's like a witch with fancy work. Miss Cary secured orders for her. As she needs a dry, spotless place for such work, we put her in here to attend, under Mrs. Lindsay's supervision, to this dépôt. Bessie is as nice and well-behaved a girl as you can find."

Now into Mrs. Lindsay's home: the good woman looked with eyes full of tears at the re-united brother and sister. "The Lord be praised, Miss Jean, that ye hae the desire o' your hairt! Oh, have na I been wae to see the sorror lines aboot your sweet een, an' your mou'. Weel, the Faither o' a' has prepared means whereby his banished may win' hame again!" Then turning to John she said, "My hairt leaps wi' joy to see you, sir: not alane for her sak' whom we a' luve, but for yer ain. Has na my soul blissed you every day, an' ca'ed doon blessings upo' your heid, for that Comfort Ha' ye arranged to save the laddies! Oh, ye maun be ain o' the Lord's jewels, to ha' sic canny thochts at your age, an' sic luve for yer fellow men."

John felt ready to disclaim all this undeserved praise, to roundly state that the thought and the act were all Jean's; but he considered that silence here might be golden, since he did not know what Jean had been doing or saying in his absence; he blushed and held his tongue.

Just then a deep groan echoed across the passage-way: Aggie, dropping her work, limped into the rag-room.

"It 's Jock—Jock Moore, her faither, an' my brither-in-law," said Mrs. Lindsay. "He 's sick, he has been sick for a week, an' he grows worse. He wadna hae a doctor, nor wad he tak' advice to gang to a hospital. True for him, he has been verra docile to tak' all my doctorin', an' I 'm no' a bad han' wi' the sick. Weel, las' nicht I said, 'Jock, I 'll hae a doctor till ye whether or no; for ye are a sick mon in my opeenion. Weel, wad ye believe it, I had to lay my han' on the Bible, a' the same as if I was takin' aith in coort, that I wadna send him to hospital whatever the doctor said. An' then he let me send. Puir mon! I 'm thinkin' he 's off his heid. There he lies, in yon rag-room, on a box-bed, an' he will no be moved. Noo the best I can do I canna keep the air o' that rag-room fit for a sick mon to breathe, forebye he 'll no hae ony windows open at nicht. Oh, Jock is powerfu' contrairy an' upsetting; I 'd no say it gif it waur not sae."

Here Aggie came back. "Father wants to see the young gentleman all alone," she said.

John hesitated; he had not been afraid of a free fight with the sailors of the Kittyhawk, but he was afraid of this sick man! Was he intending to demand of his inexperience spiritual or worldly advice? However, Jean and the Lindsays seemed to expect him to go as requested; so he gathered courage and went in.

Jock Moore lay on the box-bed: he and the bed, the floor and the window were clean; two sides of the room were piled to the ceiling with sorted rags; several gunny sacks, barrels and bales of rags, unsorted, stood between the windows. Jock's eyes were wild, and he burned with fever. Looking fixedly at John he asked,

"Do you think I am going to die?"

"I 'm sure—I don't know if you are," stammered John.

"Well, I won't; mind that, young man, I *won't*."

"You 'd be less likely to," said John, "if you had less rags and more air. The window should be open."

"I won't have the window open, and folks coming in to steal. Did you ever hear of burglary and sand-bagging? What harm is in rags? Most rag-peddler's families sleep on the rags and have no other beds. Say, young sir, will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, if I can; anything I can give you, or do."

"I won't die; but it 's no harm to have things fixed right. If I give you a letter, sealed up, will you swear not to lose it, nor to open it, nor to let any one else see it, till I 'm dead? When I *am* dead—only, mind you, I won't die—give it to Janey."

"Oh, certainly," said John, much relieved.

"Here, lay your hand on the book—Aggie's book—and swear."

John thought this was sheer insanity, but humored him.

"Say, now, on yon shelf there 's a pencil and a sheet of paper. I found them in the rags. Go ask Janey for an envelope; she has a young farmer-lad she writes to; she 's got envelopes. Give me the paper and pencil while you go to Janey."

John was obedient. Jock raised himself on his elbow and began to labor at some writing, while John went for the envelope. When he returned, Jock put his written paper in the envelope, sealed it close, looked suspiciously at John, fell back as one spent with labor, and said, "Write on it, 'Not to be opened till Jock Moore is dead.' Write it on both sides. Might add that I *won't die*, but never mind. There, go along. Take it home with you. Mind you do n't tell 'em out there. As for the rags, the boys will cart away all the sorted ones to-day. Mind what you promised! It 's little enough for a rich swell like you to do for a poor man like me. Why was n't I rich, an' you poor, I say, blame you!"

"He 's raving crazy, and you should look after him well," reported John to Mrs. Lindsay. However, crazy or not, John kept his trust sacredly, and put the envelope carefully in an inside pocket to take home.

"How strange and terrible much of this is to me, Jean," said John as they drove homeward. "How much is to be done! Now that I 've my eyes open, I wonder every person of leisure, or money, or any kind of talent, is not doing some work to lessen the great burden of sorrow, crime, and poverty."

"Sometimes I think," said Jean, "that if our Lord were back on earth, he would be working in such places as this all the time. I often think of the lines,

> " And so the Word had breath, and taught
> With human hands the creed of creeds:
> In lowliness of perfect deeds
> More strong than all poetic thought."

"Yes," said John, "in this work I am sure one follows Christ, and can ask in each case of need, what He would do."

"Dr. Yancy says," said Jean, "that God never gave a man a thing to do, concerning which it was not right to ponder how the Son of God himself would have done it. Turn up here, John; I want you to drive through Fitzig Street. That is our great trouble now; the sink of corruption for this neighborhood; the source of disease and crime—the cruel Bastile of iniquity, right here among us. We have tried all ways we could think of to better or abolish it."

"Complain of it as a nuisance," said John, when they had driven through Fitzig Street, past Mr. Tubbs' houses.

"We have—fruitlessly. Mr. Tubbs is rich, and he is angry at our methods, and says he will fight it out to his last dollar. He is able to keep his case out of court."

"Can't you form a syndicate of benevolent folks, who will be willing to invest money that for some years will bring only about three per cent. to them; and then buy these houses at a thumping big price — twice what they 're worth ?"

"He has been offered a large price, far beyond their worth. The thing is so bad that we have enlisted a number of rich people willing to join in a crusade against it; but Mr. Tubbs says he would n't sell for a million. It really seems as if Satan possessed the man, he is so angry at our work among the poor: so offended because we are building a chapel. His own tenants are sullen and hate him and his agent; they are angry because they have so many less comforts than the people in our blocks. We could have had good asphalt pavements around Kelso Street long ago, if it had not been for the fight Mr. Tubbs made against repaving. Disease spreads from that Black Maria; its tenants prevent our having as good tenants as we otherwise might, and of a class we are anxious to help. Women and girls are afraid to come and live near Fitzig Street, on account of the ruffians they meet who live in Mr. Tubbs' houses. Yet we want very much to nearly fill one of our houses with working women, widows and single women; we wish to abolish the sweaters and middlemen, and have the women deal directly with the wholesale houses for which they work. That could be done, if we provided a few machines on easy terms, and became security for the work. Aunt and Mrs. Carl Jennings are willing to take that responsibility. It is no risk; these women are remarkably fair and honest in their dealings; they like to show themselves worthy of being trusted. We have about half-a-dozen in the New Rents that are working in that way now."

"Jean!" cried John, "how much good you are all doing; how much good you have done while I have been wasting myself and all that I have. How womanly and thoughtful and wise all this work has made you! You seem to have a grasp of great questions that I know nothing about. You must show me how to help, Jean."

This no doubt made Jean greatly happy—it even took the sting out of that battle, that ever-losing battle they were fighting down in Fitzig Street with Mr. Tubbs. It was a bitter thing to know of hardship and cruelty, to see bodies and souls of men, women and children destroyed by the curse of a man's greed. First one way then another was tried; the law and the gospel were alike invoked fruitlessly. Mid-winter came, and still the fight surged around that Bastile of wrong. It was a sore battle, sore as was fought "in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

Jean wondered if Mrs. Lindsay, Mrs. Martin, Peter Gess and others were praying as they had prayed against the Gridley house iniquity. Yes, they were praying, but the answer was delayed: the vision tarried. It needed the sword of Michael to force a way into that Bastile, to open its gates, and level its walls, and still that potent sword abode in heaven.

"How can a man be so cruel just for money!" cried Jean.

"Just for money!" said John; "love of money is one of the strongest passions, Jean—a ruling passion, perhaps *the* ruling passion among men. What was I reading to you about Balaam yesterday? The riches offered by the king were more potent than the known voice of God. This morning Aunt Prudence handed me this about Balaam:

"In outline dim and vast
Their fearful shadows cast
The giant forms of empires, on their way
To ruin; one by one
They tower and are gone,
Yet in the prophet's soul the dreams of avarice stay.

"No star or sun so bright
In all the worlds of light,
That they could draw to heaven his downcast eye:
He hears the Almighty's word,
He sees the angel's sword,
Yet low upon the ground his heart and treasures lie!"

"There seems to be more than avarice in this stand Mr. Tubbs is taking," said Jean thoughtfully.

"Think so?" said John keenly. "Now I think avarice lies at the root of the whole matter; he is infuriated because Christian precept and action disallow his grasping to his neighbor's hurt. I verily believe I've got to the bottom of what is meant by 'the love of money is the root of all evil.'"

All that winter this question of the Tubbs block on Fitzig Street was in debate; on the one side Mr. Tubbs and his agent multiplied extortions and wrongs against health and decency; on the other hand the philanthropists who had in hand that part of the city vainly tried every method to bring Mr. Tubbs to order, or to eliminate him from the social equation of Fitzig Street by buying his property. John Cardiff was one of the most zealous opposers of Mr. Tubbs. This conflict suited that knight errantry that lies in all ardent youth. Jean rejoiced over John. "Is n't it wonderful!" she said to her aunt Prudence.

"John has learned sympathy by suffering. It is a very highly-tempered, pure nature that can sympathize heartily without previous experiences of its own. John has known what it is to hunger, to be day after day on a minimum allowance of food; he has known what it is to lie down in darkness, apprehensive of the night, danger-filled; he has lived days of horror in that floating pandemonium the Kittyhawk; his fellows have grown dear to him in the months he was bereaved of human presence. God has led him by a way we all know not. This is nothing peculiar, dear Jean, to John's case. We are told that 'We have not a High-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;' and also, 'For in that he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.'"

The winter wore away slowly, no doubt, for those whose hardships were great, slowly also for those who waited in disappointment; then the fiery sword of Michael fell. The alarm of fire rang over the city, the sirens shrieked, engine and hook-and-ladder companies dashed along the streets. Those who rose in the wealthy and quiet parts of the city reported of the fire that the sky was fiercely red far away over "the places where nobody lives." Others said, "Some of those crowded slums must be burning; pity they are not all burned out." Mr. Tubbs himself caught echoes of the clamor and looked forth to see which way the conflagration showed, and concluded it was too far east for anything that he owned to be injured, but "hoped those Cardiff houses would catch it before it was through with;" then he went to bed again. His agent did not rise; he was not hired to watch by night as well as prey all day. None of the Cardiffs heard the alarm; they lived farther off and were sleeping the sleep of the just. Jean had no wakeful nights now that John had come home. Down by Fitzig and Kelso Streets there was no sleeping. The firemen were heroic, or the whole quarter would have been swept by the flames. The tenants of the "Black Maria" block scrambled out as best they could, with or without their little all; they dimly realized that this night's work would leave them with no arrears of rent to pay. They were sullen, stood looking on with some light of gratified revenge in their bleared, weary eyes. "Old Tubbs is catching it! Old kite, he's lived off us long enough!" They were sulky and full of malice—their landlord's enemies; they had no homes to fight for; a change for them could not be for the worse; they cared less for these wretched lodgings than the wild beast for his lair.

The Cardiff houses were in danger; they were so dry and well ventilated they made better fuel than the "Black Maria." If that Tubbs block fire had not started in a grog-shop, where whiskey barrels promptly gave zest to the flames, it might not have burned out. But from the grog-shop in the basement it communicated to another basement where fuel and kerosene oil were sold, the oil being in a surreptitious barrel concealed under a stairway. The stairway ignited by the bursting oil barrel; the fire roared up to the roof, and the roof was dry, so were the adjacent roofs; thus the fire raged on. All the Cardiff tenants were out in force, anxious about *their* buildings. *They* had homes to fight for; they had friends in their landlords; now was the time to show gratitude. These people were neither drunk nor sullen; their quality had improved with their abodes; they were on the up grade; they had plenty of water in their houses; hydrants were numerous; out came the floods; men, women, and children swarmed over the roofs; water was carried in vessels large and small; then, when an extra engine or two came to aid their efforts, the safety of Cardiff Rents, old and new, was secured, while the fire made short work of the Tubbs block. That was swept out to empty walls, thin walls, which soon reeled and fell with a crash.

One or two firemen badly hurt; one or two horses killed; this was part of the record. Three men of the Tubbs tenants, men usually drunk at night, disappeared; a sick woman who had lain unconscious for a week was burned in her bed; an old woman and three children in an attic were burned; several were killed or badly hurt by jumping from upper windows. Such was the full story of the night's work, and in the May morning slumdom had opened into it a great breathing place, covered with fallen bricks and hot ashes, but a breathing place still, so that fresh air rushed into houses that for years had had no whiff of it; sunlight laughed into windows that no sun had ever before entered.

The city woke up, rubbed its eyes, yawned, read its morning paper, and understood that twenty-six hundred people were homeless. These people had lived in a block where there were no fire-escapes, where "box houses" were built in the rear courts, where there were only ladder staircases, only one hydrant—often out of order—for the entire congeries of inner tenements; the only means of egress to the streets from such *cul-de-sac* being a four-feet wide alley, down which, uncovered and slime-filled, ran the only sewer of the place.

"Why will people live in such places!" cried Miss Innocence.

"I should think they would be glad to be burned out," said her sister, "unless they like such things."

John Cardiff had heard the newsboy's cry, "Great fire! Fitzig Street! Black Maria burned. People killed—" He stood reading the paper aloud to the family seated at the breakfast table, but all too engrossed in the news to eat. Then his eye ran along the column; he dropped the paper and shouted, "UNINSURED!"

By some oversight, insurance on the Black Maria block had lapsed for a week. It was the one hope of help, and they were glad. Now when Gideon, listening near a Midianitish tent, heard the assurance of victory, he did not rush back to his host and marshall their array until he worshipped. Having thanked God, he took renewed courage and cried unto his three hundred, "Arise!" So Miss Prudence Cardiff first worshipped, giving thanks unto God who had made the redemption of this forlorn part of the city possible. Then carriages and street cars and telephone wires were put in requisition to summon all those who were likely to form a syndicate to buy the devastated land from Mr. Tubbs, who would now be forced to sell the land to pay the mortgage laid on the last building. Tubbs property and Tubbs methods were at a discount that spring morning, that wide swathe mown by the fire had laid bare so many enormities.

John Cardiff was indefatigable in reading to Jean; every morning he read certain chapters in the Bible to her, her aunt reading the Scriptures with her at night. After the Bible John read his daily lessons to Jean several times over, until both learned them. That morning John went into the library and to Jean laughing, the Bible open in his hand. "Jean, is n't this pat to this morning's affairs: 'Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart; but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit'?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HAND UPON THE HELM.

"I leave it to a higher will,
To stay or speed me, trusting still
That all is right, and sure that He
Who launched my bark will sail with me."

HERE were hundreds of people to be housed: hundreds who had not a bed to lie upon, a dish to eat from, food to eat or raiment to put on. They were people to whom homes had so long been wanting that they had lost the choicest qualities of humanity, for home is indispensable to the human being. Mr. Tubbs and his agent raged before whatever small audiences they had, asserting that they were all wretches, unworthy of any better treatment than they had received, that they were thieves, pickpockets, sandbaggars, drunkards, assassins. Mr. Tubbs fairly foamed and tore his hair asserting the iniquities of these breakers of all laws human and divine. There were some who heard him however, who took the common-sense view that all the same these people were rent-payers, and when they paid for rooms they should not be thrust into dens and caves of the earth; also perhaps the treatment received was cause of the degradation of morals: a man is very largely moulded by his surroundings. How can one be clean having neither water nor soap?

The first affair was to house these roofless people late of the Black Maria. Not only shelters but some little household goods must be found for them, for when people possessing the comforts of life summed the matter up they found much to be necessary and indispensable to living which Mr. Tubbs' tenants had never owned. Thus beds, tables, chairs, crockery, clothes, bedding flowed in upon the fire sufferers until they might rather be termed the fire-gainers. The mayor of the city headed the Relief Committee, and for a week or two carriages and well-dressed people thronged "the streets where nobody lived," charity was the fad of the hour. Miss Prudence Cardiff and her particular clique of helpers busied themselves in finding rooms and putting them in proper sanitary condition; there was much cleaning out of drains, lavishing of carbolic soap and paint and lime, much making immoveable windows moveable, much improving of plumbing, wherever Miss Prudence led the advance. Two additional nurses, and two Bible women additional, who were general friends, helpers and advisers, were set at work, several wealthy women who "had never known such work was needed;" becoming willingly responsible for salaries and a little money for general outlay.

Mr. Moultrie often laughed at the excitement of John and Jean in those days, and their large enthusiastic, frequently unreasonable plans. John, as having less experence than Jean, did more reckless planning.

"See here, children," said Mrs. Moultrie, having listened to them for nearly an hour, as they sat in the twilight planning what should be done when the new block should be rebuilt, "let me tell you that in war and in politics nothing is more needed than tact; tact is also greatly needed in philanthropy. In war and in politics there are ardent spirits which cannot comprehend marches and countermarches, ambuscades and firing in flight; they demand pitched battles at all times.

"Such people make excellent soldiers and very bad captains. The finest generals have been those who knew how to administer a defeat and snatch victory out of the jaws of ruin. A wise general does not deliver battle but upon some vantage ground; when he is possessed of that he manoeuvres to provoke and draw forth his enemy. So in politics what is important is not the battle but the victory. In philanthropy we cannot expect to rush straight on, overturning with a dash old customs even though they may be bad customs. We cannot compel assent to our views, we must educate up to assent. All people will not see with our eyes; there are many animals, both human and brute, which will go further and faster led than driven. We must not forget that the people we are trying to help are people, and as such have their tastes and preferences and little whims and independencies, and no doubt they are the better for having them. We would rather that they climbed up than were carried up."

Mr. Moultrie was fond of such discussions as this; discussions that often turned into monologues. He might have said more at this time—although it appears that on this theme he had said enough — but Remecke appeared. "Mr. John, there 's a man wants to see you."

"It was that Jock Moore," said John when he returned. "The man looks like a ghost rather than a man, he is so bent, white and withered. I asked him if he would not like to go to our farm and rest in the country for a few weeks and take care of his health. But no, he would not."

"He 's dying of Bright's disease; nothing would help him," said Mr. Moultrie. "I 've seen him pretty often since he was sick last fall, but he seems hard to do any thing for himself in any way."

" When he was sick last November he gave me this letter," said John, taking the cheap doubly superscribed envelope from his pocket. You see it is not to be opened while he lives. One stormy night about New-Year's he came here asking for me. When I went to see what I could do for him he said, " Nothing ; have you that letter, sir ?" I said, ' Oh, yes ; it is safely locked in my desk. Do you want it ?' He said, ' No, that is all.' It was just after dinner, and I made him sit down by a register and have a cup of hot coffee. One night in March he appeared again with the same question. When I asked him if he wanted the letter he said ' yes,' so I brought it to him. He looked at it very closely on both sides, eyed me suspiciously, then seemed to be convinced that it had not been tampered with, and told me he wished I 'd keep it a while longer. When he comes he always calls my attention to the fact that he said he would n't die and did n't. But he looked like dying to-night, I can tell you."

"There is something on his mind that occupies all his thoughts ; he cannot take any looks into eternity, his horizon is so much nearer. It is like hiding the sun with a dinner plate. ' These be thy gods, oh, Israel,' " said Mr. Moultrie.

A week or so later Jean and John had stopped at the kindergarten. They were planning to give the little ones, their teachers, mothers, and the Lark family, an outing. Omnibusses were to be sent to take them all out to the Park for a day. Starting at eight in the morning: plenty of good plain luncheon was to be sent out to them. As Jean was detailing the plan to the teacher and Miss Lark, Aggie Lindsay came hobbling in. "Oh, Miss, are you here? I was to leave word for you if you came. Father is mortal sick. The doctor says he can't last long. He is asking for the young gentleman, for Mr. Cardiff."

"We will come around there in a few minutes," said Jean.

When they reached Mr. Lindsays they found that Jock Moore had been very ill for three days. Mrs. Lindsay had taken the law into her own hands, sent away to the dealers all the sorted rags, and the unsorted ones were in the lower end of the hall, Alex, Jamie, Janey and Agnes all busily sorting them. There was the odor of dust, closeness, a pervasive poverty flavor that tasted in one's mouth persistently.

"Puir mon! He's still wild aboot the bit rags," said Mrs. Lindsay. "There wad be no peace until I tellt him a' the childer should sort 'em doon at aince. They 've been at it, sin' yesterday early, an' sin' Jamie has hauled off a load. Weel, they 're maist dune noo, an' gif I 'm no mistaken it 's the last o' rag-sortin for us a'."

She led John into the rag-room. It was clean and the windows were open. Jock Moore lay on the box-bed, still in the same place as before. He seemed asleep or in a state of coma. John bent over him. "Did you want to see me?"

Jock opened dull eyes. "Oh, yes," he said, recollecting himself. "Yes; have you the letter safe?"

"Yes, indeed. Do you want it?"

"No, keep it. You see I 'm not dead yet," but this time he did not add, "you see I wont die either." The fight on his part was nearly done, the arms of his resistance were falling from his nerveless hands. Jamie came in. "Father, we are done; the very last rag is sorted. We did it all carefully."

"What did you find, Jamie?" asked Jock feverishly.

"Nothing," said Jamie nonchalantly.

"Nothing?" said Jock querulously. "I 've been searching for twenty years! I read about the great finds in waste rags, money, bonds, papers that were wanted and big rewards given for. 'Nothing!' after twenty years' search, only a ring, and a gold pencil, and perhaps thirty or forty dollars in money. 'Nothing! Twenty years and disappointed." He turned his face to the wall.

"Puir mon, he 's oot o' his heid," sighed Mrs. Lindsay.

John sighed too; sighed because the man was *not* out of his head, but had in few words told the story of a long bootless search—summed up his life, "Nothing—and disappointed."

As he and Jean stepped into their favorite little dog-cart to drive home, Jamie Moore brought up his father's cart and old horse, and he with Alex began loading the last of the rubbish in which his father had traded. The next day Mr. Moultrie brought word that Jock Moore was dead, he had not spoken since he turned his face to the wall, the bitter word "disappointed" slipping like gall over his lips. A day or two later John said to Jean, "Come with me to Mrs. Lindsay's. Jock Moore's letter must be given to Janey, his daughter, he wanted her to open it. We 'll go about noon when they 'll all be there."

The Lindsay family were at dinner. Jamie had been out making a sale of the horse and wagon to a truck dealer: Alex was in from his work at a small grocery. Janey had her sleeves rolled down and a dry apron on. There were no more "found" garments for her to wash, the rag-trade was done. She and Mrs. Lindsay had scoured out the last rag-room, taken down the box-bed, the room stood empty, swept and garnished; so did the hall; there was no longer the close greasy taste of old rags in the air.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Jean.

"We don't know juist yet, we canna tell," said Mrs. Lindsay.

John handed Janey the letter.—"Your father asked me to give you that—after he was gone."

At this message from the dead tears came into Janey's eyes. By this time John Cardiff had become greatly curious to know what was in this letter, and whether Jock Moore's singular anxiety had really been about a matter of importance. However neither John nor any of his family were of that manner of philanthropists who feel at liberty to intrude upon the poor, and simply because they are poor trespass upon what little privacy is left to them. He had no more right, he thought, to exhibit curiosity in his poor neighbor's house than in his rich neighbor's; so having delivered the envelope to Janey, he proceeded to withdraw—though truth compels us to admit that he went somewhat slowly.

Mrs. Lindsay called to him, Mr. Cardiff, bide a wee! We may be needing a word from you, whatever this is, for puir Jock was ever a queer body! Read your letter, Janey lass, an' if it is what the lave o' us may hear read it oot."

Janey broke the carefully sealed document open, she read, read again, then read aloud,

"Look in the floor under my bed and you 'll find some money. Do n't be fools and waste it. Share even, you four, and your Aunt Lindsay and Alec. JOCK MOORE."

This Janey read, and read again aloud. "Whatever does it mean, Mr. Cardiff?" said Mrs. Lindsay; "was the man clear dementit?"

"It means, plainly enough," said John, "that Mr. Moore, who was industrious and saving, has laid up a little money which he wants divided evenly between the six of you."

"Surely that 's right," said Janey. "Aunt has done for us all."

"I would n't wonder," cried Jamie, "if it was as much as fifty or eighty dollars. Dad was always so saving."

"Aye; more like a hunder an' fifty; Jock was ever a near body," said Mrs. Lindsay.

At mention of such wealth as a hundred and fifty dollars the family sat open-mouthed.

"How much would that be apiece?" demanded Alec.

"See here," cried Aggie, "there 's no money at all. We have taken the box-bed down and cleaned the room; there was not a cent."

"Sure enough! He was daft, puir body," said her aunt.

"Let us go in there and look," suggested John. "I think he means the money is *in* the floor, and we need to take up one of the flooring boards to find it." Whereat all the family trooped into the rag-room.

"Here is where the box-bed stood, just here," said Jamie.

"And here," said John Cardiff stooping down, "is a piece of flooring board that has been cut to come out, and has been out too. Have you a strong jack-knife, Alex?"

The knife was produced and John pried up the piece of board. There were two narrow tin boxes carefully wired. John handed them to Janey. "There is nothing else," he said, and all looked into the wonderful hole to reassure themselves.

"Coom into the ither room," said Mrs. Lindsay, "and let us see what there is. Are the boxes heavy, Janey?"

"One is," said Janey.

"Coom, Mr. Cardiff, you 'll count it oot to us; we all sittin' ben, aboot the table. Puir Jock, to think o' him sparin' an' savin' to lea' a giftie aifter he 's died an' gone! Lassies, clear aff the table, sae Mister Cardiff can sit doon by it."

The table was cleared, and Jamie unfastened the wire about the boxes. John lifted off one lid, then promptly laid it back. "Mrs. Lindsay, perhaps it will be well for you to draw down the curtains at the front windows, and lock the door."

These suggestions were obeyed, but produced a great solemnity in the family. Jean had stood silent, watching all these proceedings; now she was inclined to laugh, to see John's preternatural dignity at being suddenly made administrator to the effects of Jock Moore, deceased. Privacy being assured, John uncovered both boxes. The smaller one was full of little rolls, in tough paper; the larger one was packed with bills.

Jock Moore had certainly not saved and toiled for the sake of the duty and pleasure of laying up money for his family. They were ready to give him the credit of it, for it is easy to think well of the dead. The one pleasure of Jock's life, for many years, had been the hoarding and counting of this money. Once or twice he had invested and had made money by so doing; but the agonies he had suffered fearing that he might lose and not gain, his terror of being known as a "moneyed man" and robbed, the loss of the dear delight of seeing and fingering his accumulations, had deterred him from further ventures. He preferred to leave the women to support the family, while he worked and hoarded, his rag-trade being more lucrative than the family knew, and ever before him hung the splendid hope like a crown gleaming low in his sky—the hope of finding a fortune in his rags.

John Cardiff proceeded to count the money, the heirs of the rag-trader watching with bated breath. "Jean, come look over with me, and check for me," said John.

The bills were counted. The little rolls were opened, found to contain five dollar gold pieces, and these were counted.

"I make it an even five thousand dollars!" said John.

"Yes," said Jean, showing her tablets.

The family turned pale and their mouths hung open.

"Now, boys," said John briskly, "let us see what you make it. Let your sister Janey take paper and pencil, and set down what you call off. Count a hundred, and lay it out, and she will note it on paper." This was longer labor, for the boys trembled and miscounted, and forgot, but at last they reached the five thousand. "Now, Mrs. Lindsay, you and Aggie go over it, and I 'll check," said John.

By this time the inheritors were becoming accustomed to the thought of wealth, and the counting was more prompt.

"This money must not stay here," said John firmly. "In an hour the bank will be closed. Let one of you come in the cart with me, and see it deposited."

"You go, Alex," said Jamie.

"Rin mak yer'sel tidy," commanded his mother.

"Do n't be long about it," said John Cardiff. "Jean, will you go to the kindergarten and wait until I come for you?"

"I say, Janey," bawled Jamie, "now you can marry Nate Bliss, and buy that farm together!" Janey blushed furiously, and looked sidewise toward John, hoping he had not heard the dreadful words. Jamie was remorseless. He cried, "Mr. Cardiff, how much can we have apiece?"

"About eight hundred and thirty dollars," said John, making a hasty calculation.

"Whew!" shouted Jamie. "I say, Jen, that market-garden farm Nate Bliss wants costs two thousand five hundred. He says he 's laid up five hundred. If you put in yours, and Aunt Lindsay will go in with you, you 'll be able to pay two thousand, and buy a hundred and sixty dollars' worth of tools, and seeds, and have only five hundred to borrow, and maybe you can borrow Allie's money."

Jamie was working away with a pencil on the back of his father's letter, while Janey was pulling his sleeve and imploring him to "hush," and Jean and John looked steadily into the street, the window through its grove of small wares, affording them intermittent views of bare feet, children's legs, and draggled gowns of women, or big broken brogans of men, travelling by.

Alex appeared, the money had been repacked by Aggie and Mrs. Lindsay, the boxes well wired up. John warned Alex to be careful of his trust; the two climbed into the dog-cart and drove rapidly away.

"Jamie," said Janey, tears in her eyes, "could n't you be quiet before folks? To go talking like that before Mr. Cardiff! Why did n't you hush when I bade you?"

"What harm have I done?" demanded Jamie. "Miss Cardiff, is it any wrong? Nate Bliss is a nice fellow, works on a market-garden farm out where our sister Allie lives. He likes Janey and Janey likes him, and they mean to be married when they can get a place; and now they can get the place, for I 've told 'em how. What harm is it to do it, or to say it, Miss Car diff?"

"None," said Jean promptly, while Janey put her apron over her head and sat silent and concealed in its recesses. Jamie, the planner, went on: "Aunt Lindsay and Aggie just long for the country; and aunt knows all about hens, ducks, bees, and raising garden stuff. Aunt and Nate and Alec could do the garden and farm work, and Janey could keep the house, and Aggie do the sewing."

A protesting groan came from Janey at being thus openly planned for.

"What would you do, Jamie," asked Jean; "go in the country too?"

"No, no, miss. I hate the country! Give me noise and wheels and sidewalks. I 'm going to be a machinist; I always wanted to. They say it 's hard to get into the shops; but now I 've no one to take care of, now I 've got some money, why I 'm *bound* to get into a machine-shop and learn to be a machinist, a tip-topper. Oh, I 've laid awake nights planning how I 'd get into a machine-shop; and Alec, he 's laid planning how he could get into the country and own a cow and a pair of oxen."

"All folks have their ambitions," thought Jean, "and here these lads have theirs, and at night built their air castles instead of sleeping." How good it was to think that their moderate wishes could be met! Here Aggie broke in a little spitefully, to pay her brother out for telling Janey's secrets:

"Oh, yes, you Jamie, you 'll learn to be a machinist, and you 'll earn big wages, and you 'll save your fortune, and you 'll get to be a man, and you 'll marry Amy Lark. I know what you mean."

Jamie was dumb and turned red to the roots of his hair. Then he broke forth: "So I will. I like a girl that can laugh and be cheerful, no matter what 's up. But I 'll not live down here, I can tell you. I 'll have a little clean house, a whole house, painted white, out on the edge of town, a home with a picket fence round it."

"Another case of 'Sally who lived in our alley,'" thought Jean, smiling, and then she heard a subdued titter from Janey's bower of pink calico. She went to her and pulled down the apron. Janey was between tears and laughter.

"Why not?" said Jean. "Jamie will be a good man, and Amy Lark will be a good woman, and aunt says that God is a God of the families of Israel. He made homes to begin with. I 'm glad you like some one, Janey, some one that will be good to you, and take you out to live in the country. I am glad you wont have to live longer in this basement, washing six days in the week. God himself has set open a door for you to go out into a larger place. When you are settled in a home in the country I shall come out and call upon you—and I shall give you a wedding present too, Janey."

Then they all began to talk and plan, so that it happened that John Cardiff did not find his sister at the kindergarten, but returning from the bank, drove to Mrs. Lindsay's for her. Jean took her place beside John, Mrs. Lindsay, Janey and Aggie standing a beaming group at the head of the basement steps to see them off. John courteously lifted his hat as they drove away.

"You would not have done that once, John," said Jean, looking at her brother with shining eyes, "but since you came home you are courteous to the poor."

"I have a model before me now," said John, "my Lord, a most fair example:

> "The best of men
> That e'er wove earth about him—
> A kind, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
> The first true gentleman that ever lived."

"How happy we are to-day!" cried Jean, "and how happy we have left everybody down there behind us!"

CHAPTER XVII.

TILL CHRIST BE FORMED IN THEE.

> "Who did leave his Father's throne
> To assume thy flesh and bone?
> Had he life, or had he none?
>
> "If he had not lived for thee,
> Thou hadst died most wretchedly,
> And two deaths had been thy fee."

THERE had been a time in their infancy and childhood when the Cardiff twins had been closely like each other. In the stormy period of their early youth, John leading the way and Jean resolute to follow all his divarications, they had still been like. Then had come the hour when conscience, a most despotic power when roused to assert itself, had taken the command of Jean's life as of that of her aunt Prudence, and Jean and John had diverged widely in words and works. Those were the times when John was throwing himself away, and physically deteriorated, appearing a weakling beside the stately development and elastic vigor of his sister. Now again change had passed over John; in him too conscience awoke to take the sceptre. John sowed to better harvests; physically he gained: tall and broad, he looked down on Jean from superior height; he filled her with admiration of feats of strength in which she never thought to compete. Again they pursued the same studies, the same work, the same pleasures. John had come over to that moral vantage-ground where his aunt and sister stood; they were like-minded once more. Jean's spiritual life was calm, content, assured, strong in faith, rich in doing, too busy for others in the Master's service to be carping about herself, or fearing that the Lord would forget her or had suffered her to deceive herself. John had his dark hours. In his happy home, surrounded by friends, he came suddenly into lonely terror, such as in that first night alone in an open boat upon an unknown sea, when death sat on the thwart facing him, and mocked his miseries. There were hours when John questioned everything, especially his own sincerity and the hope of his calling; when Satan came to him as to Luther, saying, "Is it not in God's word 'the soul that sinneth it shall die'? Your soul has sinned, and shall it not therefore die?" John had not been able to read Luther's vigorous answer: "Behold, Satan, it is written also that 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;' so, since I am a sinner, he came into the world to save me." Instead John went tumbling down into the depths. David found the depths a very good place; *de pro-*

fundis clamavi, and reaching from the profound of space "he saw the helping of a hand." John often found the darkness about him too great to see any helping hand. No doubt much of this was constitutional with John, and no doubt some of it was still the gathering of tares wherewith he had once sowed his life.

"John," said Mr. Moultrie, "when gloom overtakes you, get out and help somebody. Say to yourself, if you cannot *be* you can *do*. Get out, forget John Cardiff, even forget his destiny, and pull some other fellow out of the mire. Let yourself alone, and get at least this comfort, that you snatch some brother from despair and cheat the devil of some other prey. The best mental medicine for you, John, is action."

John felt that this diagnosis of his case was correct, at least it was better than any he could make for himself. While sometimes he remained by himself and gloomed, at others he worked out of the shadows. One evening—perhaps it was because he had worked more than usually hard at his studies, and Aunt Prudence and Jean were away on a visit—John felt very gloomy indeed. A brisk walk suggested itself to him. Going out, habit drew him unaware down toward Kelso Street, and on into Fitzig Street. When he reached there, the day was done; the sky above the city was as gloriously blue and pure as if it did not dome all that smoke and sin: in the clear depths that near world, Venus, burned in white flame, and all along the horizon was a deep crimson band, the waning splendors of the day, as if the city was a jewel of God's choice hooped in a ring of fire. John stayed his steps in that broad vacant space where the Black Maria block had once defied God, cursed men, and had fallen in a night. The rubbish heaps had been cleared away, the new buildings begun, and already among the piles of granite and brick, and the beds of mortar, could be read the plan of what was to come. The passages were to be wide; the courts free from the horrible iniquities of box houses; drainage, ventilation, plenty of water privileges, were to be secured; and lo! a circular breathing space, where seats were to be placed, a fountain was to play, and sunshine could fall unobstructed. This space had been cleared and the basin for the fountain prepared. In the centre stood a short column. Upon this a piece of statuary was to stand. John had seen the designer's plan for that—the gift of a rich man, foreign born, whom men called "Queer." As John stood at the edge of the fountain-basin a man came up on the other side and stood looking about. There were red lanterns burning here and there on the construction heaps, overhead hung a full moon, whose white light made all the granite gleam like marble.

"What is to be here?" asked the stranger.

"A piece of statuary—an old woman with a babe in her arms and two little children leaning on her knees; around the base of the group will run this inscription: 'These perished here, forgotten of all but God.' When the buildings here burned down, an old woman and three children perished in the attics; there were no fire-escapes, though nearly three thousand people were crowded into this group of buildings; the narrow, steep, filthy stairs were a death-trap, up which the flames went, cutting off hope of escape. He who gave this fountain and memorial group has heard words here: 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.'"

"Why, what was there so bad beyond other places? There are scores of just such tenement-houses. Why was such a din raised about the 'Black Maria.'"

"Yes; unfortunately there are such places, many of them, the earth is cursed with them, men are made beasts by them. There are many, and even one such would be too many. The time is coming when not one such place will be allowed; when the city will not permit such abuse and degradation of citizens; when manhood will not permit such trampling upon fellow manhood; when the church will not permit such desecration of the image of God. Every such place as the 'Black Maria' will be wiped out, and the wage-earner will be granted a home and all the possibilities of a home. To kennel him in such places as the 'Black Maria' will be considered as disastrous an infringement of right and decency as to allow him to work naked in the sun—as we see the old Egyptian workers pictured on monuments, or as I have seen the natives working in the South Sea islands."

"You are glib with your prophecies, young man. What will bring about such a change as this?"

"Just that which has brought about such changes as the abolishing of the sale of wives and children for a man's debts, or a lord's right to slay his serf for any cause or no cause. That which will bring about the change will be God taking a hand in it—as he did here, for instance."

The stranger stood silent for a while, looking at the great vacancy between walls and walls, emptiness save for derricks here and there, where once that teeming horror had housed its thousands. Finally he said, "Young man, I don't know who you are, but I owned the

'Black Maria;'" then he turned and picking his way among blocks of stone, beams of wood, little heaps of granite chippings and scraps of timbers, he disappeared along the further side of Fitzig Street.

"He has come to look upon the field where he fought a battle with God and was worsted," thought John to himself. The ascending moon warned him that it was time to turn homeward. His way lay through one of the business streets of the city. Stores filled with all manner of merchandize lined the walks. Windows full of jewels and silverware, cut glass, painted china, glowing pictures, rows upon rows of books, choice fabrics of all varieties: people passed in haste, or idly stood to admire, or eagerly to crave. Among the windows was one of a large clothing store, a window filled with suits, attractively exhibited, with ties, hats, kerchiefs—a full outfit. Before this window stood a youth of about John's age and height, but thin and stooping of shoulders; his face was pale, hinting of recent illness; his clothes were threadbare, thin, outgrown, frayed, clean, but little likely to resist much more brushing; the lad's shoes were patched and out of shape; his big hands, hanging by his side, were working convulsively. John had seen various passions deeply limned on human faces—hate, pity, love, envy, rage;

but as he passed he thought that he never had seen such a longing, such intense craving written on any face, as on that other lad's as he looked at those garments. " Poor fellow, he just fairly devours them with his eyes," thought John. Then it flashed upon him that in his own purse lay, practically unneeded, money enough to cover all that want; he could be a providence to that other boy; he had not been asked, neither is Providence always asked; need is a sufficient prayer. All this filled John's heart with a great joy, the reflection of the joy coming into that fellow creature's heart through him. He turned back: the lad with a sigh and a face of bitter despair, was leaving the window. John laid his hand upon his shoulder.

" Nice suits, ar' n't they? Want one?"

" Do n't I? But what 's the use of wanting?"

" Come in and get one: having a suit will make you glad, and giving it will make me glad. Two glads for the cost of one suit."

" The lad started, hesitated, flushed.

" I see," said John, " you 've been sick; and that means out of work, and that means out of money. You 've outgrown your clothes while you were sick; some folks do; I did."

" Yes, and I can't get any kind of nice light work, such as a half-sick fellow can do, because, you see, I look so shabby. I 've got a good recommendation or two, but as soon as they see a gawky, lean, ill-dressed fellow, they hunch up their shoulders and say, ' Nothing.' "

"Come along in, we 'll knock spots out of that objection by decking you out in a new suit; come on."

" You 're not fooling me, are you?" hesitated the lad.

" Why, do I look like a cad that would add insult to injury? Look here, I 've been through the depths myself, and I know what trouble is, though perhaps not exactly your kind of trouble."

" I hope you 'll excuse me for seeming so suspicious," said the lad, " I 've had so much hard treatment. I 've been in the hospital over two months, had typhoid-pneumonia. Now I 'm out I went back to my place—I was in the packing-room of a wholesale china store—and they thought I did n't look strong enough to do about twice as hard work as they paid wages for, so though I 'd served them well for over two years, they turned me back to starve, with nothing from them but a recommendation—and they as rich as Jews! Then I 've paid my lodging faithfully till three nights ago, when I did n't have it to pay, and the woman told me not to come back, she could n't house me for nothing.

Yet she was my mother's cousin, and many a pail of water I 've carried for her!"

"Come in, come in!" said John, "it will be more fun trying on suits than thinking of your injuries.

They went in and John ordered a suit, shoes, cap, underclothes. It is hard for the habitually well-fed to realize that anyone can be hungry. Like the French Princess, they believe that the poor always have plenty of bread and cheese. Possibly it was because John had been almost starved once himself, that now it was borne in upon his mind that this lean lad was suffering from lack of food. When the purchases were made, put on, and the old garments were rolled into a bundle, John said to his new friend,

"Come on, let 's go to a restaurant; how would chocolate, corn-bread, and a chop strike you?"

"They 'd knock me silly," said the boy with a joyful laugh. While they were eating—John pretending rather than really eating, for he had dined at six, his protégé said, "I know I eat as if I felt hungry, and I am. This is the first fair meal I 've had for three days. I 've been living on five cents a day."

"Whew!" cried John, "what can you get for five cents?"

"Six biscuits, rolls I mean, a day old. I ate two each meal."

"Well, I 've seen the time when two biscuits would have looked pretty rich living to me," said John, and leaning forward, idly playing with his spoon, he told his tale of shipwreck. The other lad with rounded eyes, and almost too interested to eat, heard the tale and regarded him as a hero. When they left the restaurant John said, "It is nearly ten. Do you know where you can get a bed?"

"Yes. There 's a men's lodging-house down that street. Beds fifteen and twenty-five cents."

"There then—there 's fifty cents; get a bed and a breakfast and be on this corner at nine o'clock, waiting for me."

"Young gentleman," said the lad earnestly, "I have n't any words to tell you how I feel for your kindness. You seem to me like the fairy people I used to read about when I was a little shaver, or like the gods that came down and gave men favors, as I read in some books I had about Rome and Greece. I like books, and I thought a heap of those. I bought them second-hand out of money I 'd saved off my feeding, but I had to sell them this last week for the little I 've lived on."

"Cheer up," said John, "you may get them back. Good-night."

John walked home whistling and singing: he forgot that he had ever had a black hour.

He found Mr. Moultrie in the library, told him about seeing Mr. Tubbs, and then about the starving lad. "To-morrow morning I mean to take him round to Dr. Imlay and ask him to see if he needs any more doctoring."

"That's right: do a kindness thoroughly when you begin one. Tell me, John, would you have noticed this lad's trouble and have cared for him in this way a few years ago?"

"Of course not; I was such a fool I should have said his troubles were his own lookout and no affair of mine."

"And what has made the difference, John? The whole currents of your being have set another way. This is nothing less than the great power of God. This is the Christ being formed in you the hope of glory. Your Lord will not disdain to say to you one day, 'I was naked and ye clothed me.'"

The next day John took his protégé, Jem Long, to Dr. Imlay.

"Run down, discouraged, underfed, overtired, not fully pulled out of his sickness yet," said Dr. Imlay. "Needs a shoulder-brace to straighten up those bowed shoulders, and some exercise in your gymnasium, eh, John?"

"Yes; but he needs work most, doctor. That would take the discouragement out of him."

"So it would; so it would. See here, Long, can you drive?"

"Yes, sir; I drove a deal for the China house."

"My day driver, a lad of your age, dislocated his knee cap about an hour ago, by tumbling down-stairs. I have put him in plaster and he 'll be off duty for four or five weeks. Let us see what you can do in his place. It will be the very thing for you to drive about all day in this delicious weather. After that we 'll no doubt find you steady work if you turn out well. He that 's worth work gets work."

"Always, doctor?" queried John, who was beginning to look below the surface and see into the heart of things. The doctor looked at John and shook his head. "It 's a riddle," he said, "a riddle, this nineteenth century life with its bad and its good, its boasting and failing. A riddle."

"A riddle that will need solving with a sword maybe, like that of the sphinx," said John.

"Perhaps rather with the gospel," said the doctor.

"Do you mean that Christian people are to set all matters right?" asked Jem Long, throwing himself into the conversation. "Why, sir, that firm I worked for, doing my very best, over hours, morning, fairly running my legs off to accomodate, they were great church people, sir, and ran the biggest kind of a Sunday-school; but it was not right for them to give me only three and a quarter a week when I did work that was easy worth five! It was not right for them when I had done my best, and got sick of a cold doing their errands in the rain—without overshoes, or umbrella, or whole boots, because the wages were so low—I say it was not right for them to feel no interest in me, and refuse to take me back, saying, 'Oh, you 're not strong enough for us, Jem!' Is that the kind of Christians that will make things right?"

"No," said the doctor, shaking his head as over a very bad case indeed, "no, my lad; I 'm afraid that is the kind of surface Christianity that develops infidels and socialists. The fact is that in these days Christianity, or a fluent profession of the same is popular, wins confidence, gives a man prominence; and it is a great temptation to some men to bid for public good-will by exibiting a semblance of Christianity which does not delve deep into the heart, remodel the life, and liberate the purse."

John Cardiff walked home slowly pondering how far that hasty statement "he that 's worth work gets work" was correct. He had seen many men in his experiences among the wage-workers, men ready and willing to work, able to work hard and like Jem Long prepared to give for wages more than the wages paid for, who yet stood idle in the market-place. He still thought on these things that evening when the Cardiff parlors were full of the friends of Aunt Prudence, who were discussing the question how to help the young working women, and were maturing plans to make the new block of buildings truly helpful to them in making homes and in obtaining fair wages.

"The best of men," said Aunt Prudence, "find tremendous difficulties besetting the way to righteousness, to constant right-doing. How special and terrible are the difficulties for a girl, single-handed, alone, half educated or quite uneducated. The finding of work and wages is not for these girls a matter of choice, it is an affair of force, that or starve, that or die. How often girls have come to me saying, 'Find me something honest to do; my money is gone. I have tramped the streets for work until I am footsore and my shoes are worn out. I have no money, no work, no home unless I pay for it.' "

"Where," said Dr. Yancy, "is the helping hand? Where a real Christian is, is the hand of the Christ. That helping clasp of his human flesh must be through us his followers, for he has ascended to the skies and left the poor always with us."

"They tell us," said Mr. Dysart, "that the efficient are always fed. Are they? Suppose we grant it. What of the thousands who cannot be efficient for lack of training, for lack of opportunity? There are two hundred and ninety-three thousand working-girls in this country. Most of them in cities where neighbor does not know neighbor, and the individual is lost in the crowd. Is it not a fair estimate to grant that the ninety-three thousand are skilled workers after whom the wage-payers will seek, and whom they cannot do without? Then what is to become of the two hundred thousand, if only the efficient are sure to be fed?"

"It seems to me," said Mrs. Yancy, "it would be well to try and help them to become efficient. They should have opportunities for early training. There should be patience shown them; they should not be hastily cast out on the highways of life to perish, cast out because of some slight fault or of well-meaning ignorance. We are willing to show our own well-dowered children how. Why not show these others how?"

"We want a bureau of friendship," cried Helen Cary, "a place where they can come when out of work and out of wages, and when the mouth of hell is yawning wide at them. We want in every city places not beset with red tape and garrisoned by indifference, but places where hearts are kind, and ears are attentive, and minds are quick with suggestion."

"Yes," said Aunt Prudence, "we do n't want to wait until neglect has driven them mad, and then set open the Door of Hope and say, 'Come! Return! Repent!' That is good; prevention is better."

"There are stores," said Mr. Moultrie, "that can pay good wages if they would, are amply able to pay good wages, but do not because they can take advantage of necessities and get their clerks for starvation wages. Women, millionaire women who are joint owners of a flourishing business, dare expect God to forgive them when they offer girls three dollars a week for their whole living, in a city where board cannot be had in a safe place for less than three dollars and a half. There are stores where yearly profit nears or reaches a million, where girl clerks are paid as low as three or four dollars a week, are shut out at slack times; are required to dress well, to wear well laundered clothes, and are kept late over hours in busy times. It seems to me that much of that profit was dyed red with blood-money!"

"If women, rich women, made common cause with poor women," cried Jean, "these things would not be. Why cannot we have Women's Bureaus, not administered by salaried people who serve for salaries and do not really care, but where workers and sisters with warm hearts stand ready to hear, advise, help, protect, defend."

"Ah, yes," said Dr. Yancy, "open doors, wherein the Man of Galilee would stand, if he came that way."

Said Mr. Moultrie, "When all the great domains of Sutherland were desolated of inhabitants to make way for sheep, turning the homes of men into folds for sheep, the woes of a thousand beggared exiles drew forth this strong protest:

> "Spake the Eternal, and must then another land
> Now be accursed? Say by whom was this done?
> Harriet Howard, haught Duchess of Sutherland,
> Thine was the name that rung out to the Throne."

"The suitable housing of wage-earners," said Mr. Dysart, is one of the burning questions of the day; it is coming to the front, and will stand there until solved. Another question that will also demand honest solution is that of proper wages for working women. The humanitarian as well as the Christian feels that these are themes of the hour."

"Mr. Linwood told me the other day," said Jean, "that we were beginning wrong; the place to begin, he says, is at the top, with the mechanics and better paid workmen, who would be able to move into the suburbs and continually buy their houses. He says suburban homes will lessen the congestion of the cities, and leave the tenement-houses less crowded. He thinks we are all wrong beginning with the Kelso Street Rents.

"What did you tell him?" asked John.

"I told him that he might be quite right in his plan of beginning at the top, but that Providence had plainly shown us that we were to begin at the bottom, because we were the owners of a certain slum, once known to ill-fame as Cardiff Rents, but which was now gaining a less evil notoriety. Mr. Linwood is on the right side though, John. He says that owners of houses where wage-earners live should be satisfind with five per cent. on their property. Five per cent. is as much as the banks give and as much as Government Bonds yield, and the house-owner should not insist on squeezing more out of houses than he can get out of most other safe investments. He also told me that in one area in New York two hundred and fifty-five thousand tenants were found, of people compelled to live in the city the year round, and do rough, hot, dirty work; yet of all this great number only three hundred and six people had facilities for bathing, while great and rich and boastful as New York is she has no public bath.

Why, what cruelty this is! How can people live so? What should *we* do without baths?"

The intense, fairly pathetic earnestness with which Jean put this question called forth a laugh.

"We laugh," said Miss Prudence; "laughter is very often humanity's refuge from tears! There is more in this bath question than a nice clean face. Two hundred and fifty-four children in a thousand die in these hot, crowded, water-famine houses?"

"And what is the death rate in other localities, here in ours?" asked John.

"Thirty," said Dr. Imlay. "Herod, known to evil fame, never slaughtered half so many innocents as our tenement house system, unwhipped of justice slaughters in one year."

"Death dogs these ill-housed homeless wage-earners all along the line," said Mr. Dysart. "Twenty-one in a thousand is the entire city death rate; about fifteen in a thousand for the healthful localities such as this, but sixty-two in a thousand in the tenement-houses. 'The voice of thy brother's blood calleth unto me from the ground!'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOME?

"As on the sea of Galilee,
The Christ is whispering peace."

WARMER weather again, and the Cardiffs were preparing to leave the city. They were not to go alone. There was a sea-side cottage to be arranged for, where mothers and children could be sent for outings of two or three weeks. The tireless hospitality of the Cardiff farm was still offered, and for three months pairs of city children could go up there for a month's vacation each, to get acquainted with nature and learn the other and sweeter side of life.

The Lindsays were gone from the city. The market-garden farm was bought. Janey was married. John and Jean had driven out to see them one beautiful long spring day, and had come home with an invitation for a three weeks' visit for Lois Lacy, and an offer of adoption for some destitute orphan when one should be found. Said Mrs. Lindsay, "Now that the Lord has made us sae rich, we maun share wi' the puir."

"So rich," said John to Jean as they stood under showers of rosy fragrant snow coming down upon them from the apple trees; "eight or nine hundred each, and a mortgage on this little place, and they are 'so rich!' I believe, Jean, that poverty or wealth is an affair of the heart, and riches are as we look at them. I 've seen some terribly poor millionaires, and we both know people who plead poverty all the time while they have from fifty to a hundred thousand well invested."

One lovely evening John and Jean were sitting by the open windows of the drawing-room, where they had a view along the street. The long rosy glow of a spring evening was smiling back the twilight.

"Hillo!" said John, "who is this wanderer from some other sphere who has strayed into our precincts? Jean, our streets are so shady and broad and clean hereabouts, I wonder why more poor people do not stroll through them."

"Because there is too little fellowship between rich and poor," said Jean looking toward the pedestrian noted by John.

He was a tall larged-boned man of a shambling gait; he wore a comfortable new suit, a stiff felt hat, his heavy new shoes rang upon the pavement; he wheeled a large, cheap but strong baby carriage, in which were two children.

"Why, that 's Sime Ridder!" said Jean; "I 'm going out to see his children, perhaps he came up this way to show them."

Sime looking toward his goal, the Cardiff mansion, saw a gracious girl coming down the wide granite steps, the light breeze fluttered softly the folds of her white dress, and blew toward Sime the rich fragrance of a great bunch of carnations fastened at her belt.

"Both the children out for an airing, Mr. Ridder! I want to see them. What have you named the baby?" Jean turned back the little knit shawl wherewith the careful 'Mandy Ann had covered the pink face of the new inhabitant of the planet earth.

"Jean, Miss. It is to remind me 'n 'Mandy Ann a bit of your name; an' Patience, to likewise suggest your Aunt Miss Cardiff. Jean Patience, it is as near as we 'd make bold to come to it, but that far is pleasing to me."

"It is a nice name, and a nice baby, Mr. Ridder," said Jean. She did not slip a banknote into the baby's pink palm; she knew Sime had not brought his children there for a gift. She took the flowers from her belt, and laid them above the baby's pillow.

"You are giving them a long airing and this is a nice street to come to, it is so quiet and shaded. How well both the little ones look, and your wife is well too?"

"Indeed she is, Miss, doing fine. Jean Patience is the only one of our four born at home;

but now we have a home, a place that can be kept clean and quiet, why we 're glad and proud for the baby to be born there. Says I to 'Mandy Ann, them two cherubs looks so nice. I 'm goin' to show them to the young lady; an' 'Mandy Ann she says, 'yes, do.'

"There they be, Miss, and a whole heart full of comfort resides in them two. The Lord has give me back all he took away—if it was the Lord took 'em away. It 's that I 'm at a stand over, for you see them two babies died of conditions that was n't of the Lord's makin', I know. Peter Gess, he reads out a lot of Scripture to us on Sunday afternoons. Sometimes as many as a dozen or fifteen is a sittin' about, hearkening to him. Last Sunday he read out the Lord gave an' the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. He says to me, "Sime, mind that, an' do n't you go to quarrelling against God." Says I, "Peter Gess, when I 've made up my mind it *was* God, then, says I, I 'll say them words, if so be I gets grace to do it. But, Miss, it was n't to quote Peter, nor yet me, nor even to show you the babies I came here to-night. Rufus Hapgood, he has laid out to me that the spoken word can't in no wise be called back; he says it goes on an' on making waves in the air, as a pebble does in water, and once gone, is out of your reach for ever Miss, if that is the case of a man and his words, well would it be for him to keep his mouth shut on most occasions. But, Miss, if we can't take 'em back, we can express better feelin's. Do you mind the first time ever you see me? I was like a man mad along of my troubles, many of them of my own providing, and not being able rightly to sort out my own blame from other peoples'. Why, Miss, I heaved the whole lot on other folks. I said wild hard words to you, Miss, and more than that I cursed my neighbor, and that is what no one has a right to do, be the neighbor alive or dead. Yes, Miss, I said the Cardiff appetite for money had devoured my children and spoiled my life. True it is for you, Miss, you took some of that same money and made a man of me by giving me a home, and into that home the Lord has sent two children, and I 'm able to give 'em food and clothes, not to omit a baby-carriage and a toy now and then. I 've got an outlook, Miss; there 's hope and encouragement in my lot. So I want to ask you to wipe out of your mind so far as you can all the wildness I talked yonder; the name of Cardiff is turned to a blessing down yonder. There 's the Cardiff kindergarten, the Cardiff Comfort Hall, the Cardiff Chapel. There's two blocks of the Cardiff Rents, good homes in them both, there 's the Babies Milk Dépôt; there 's the new buildings going up, with hope in them for the girls; there 's the expectation we have now of new pavements down here; we 've got the nurse, the Bible-woman, the little school for girls, and what do you think, Miss! for two weeks, three nights in a week if a band has n't come down there and played to us for an hour, free. Rufus Hapgood, he says he 's sure that 's your brother's doing. It do cheer us up amazing. Now, Miss, good-night and a blessing on you, and all of your name whether looking backward or forward, for you 've made it a blessing!"

Sime Ridder had been holding his felt hat by the rim, looking deeply into the crown to find his remarks, as if he suspected that his laboring ideas had oozed through his head and taken refuge in the Derby. Evidently Sime was proud of his new suit, but far from easily at home therein.

"You look very thriving and comfortable," said Jean approvingly.

"I am that, Miss. There 's a plenty more would be lifting themselves up, if some of their betters would but hold out the hand to them to give them a lift. It 's a fair footing a man needs, if he 's to get out of a swamp like. You give us the fair footing when you gave us homes to make a start in. I do n't make my feelings plain, miss. What I want to say shines about one like a whole music-hall of light and sound, but I can't fetch it over my tongue. I never was a master-hand at wrastling over ideas, it takes Peter Gess to do that. So good-night to you, Miss."

Jean turned to reascend the steps as Sime trundled his willow wagon away, but she paused; an old friend was drawing near.

"Well, Jean, is that one of your special protégés? He's not handsome. Why don't you drop this philanthropy fad, child, and be happy?"

"I am happy—really, deeply happy," said Jean, lifting her radiant eyes, dimples lurking in her cheeks and about her pretty mouth, "all the happier for finding ways of being useful."

"Leave such ways to older and duller folks. What society wants of girls like you is to become charming social queens, agreeable ladies at home and abroad."

"I'm sure I'm agreeable, I know I am. I make a point of it," laughed Jean. With this old friend's granddaughters Jean had once quarrelled over baby-rattles and disputed rubber dolls, rings, and other infant riches.

"I'm sure this work will wear you out and make you old before your time, little girl."

"I feel sure that it will, in its infinite variety, be to me a spring of perpetual youth. Even if it were not—even if I knew it would wear on me and bring age too soon—how could I lay it down when once I have seen the need? It would be impossible; once having seen what I should do, there is no way for me but to do it."

"I see, the Cardiff conscience. Cardiff conscience is at times hard to rouse, but being roused it is potent. Your Aunt Prudence is a case in point of the mastery of conscience in the Cardiffs. When your grandfather was a young man, he paid out ten thousand dollars to his own evident loss, to keep his word, when he had given no written signature and could not be compelled by any law—'

"But the law of his conscience," interposed Jean. "I am glad he did that, it gave him moral strength; it could not have been to his loss."

"Well, I tell you what, ten thousand was a big lot of money in those days—and big to him, a beginner in business. A very honorable man was your grandfather, though he would have stared at these philanthropy fads. He put into the market such tenements as he had: people rented them with their eyes open; if they did not like them, let them go; he forced no one. Why, after all, was not that proper business dealing? He dealt with adults, not minors."

"I think the poor are often put in the helpless condition of minors by their lack of education and their disadvantages of living. It seems to me that to offer them miserable lodgings because they are obliged to take them, being so poverty-stricken, is to take advantage of their necessities. I wish my grandfather's conscience had waked up about his poor neighbors in his tenement-houses."

"Do you know I think conscience becomes more sensitive, applies itself to more subjects as the years go on. This care of the housing of the poor, for instance, is stirring many people to work and to sacrifice, yet how well off the most wretched poor in these days are in comparison with the serfs of the middle ages. Who cared then if a lord killed a few serfs in a rage? it did not lower his standing in the community one whit. Now states-prison for life, or capital punishment summarily dealt out, would be his portion. In those old days a serf, man or woman, could be yoked to cart or plow and driven in the furrows of the field. Now the poor work if they wish to; if not they may stay idle."

"Do n't you think it might be better put that they work if they can get work? What about the great army of the unemployed? Some of the asphalt pavement superintendents have told me that whenever they need thirty men a hundred or more are on hand, fierce to be employed. As to the number of serfs," added Jean with a shudder, "Mr. Moultrie has been taking John and me through a course of history of the Middle Ages in Europe, 'History of Civilization,' 'Constitutional History of England,' and many more histories very largely filled with atrocities. I am glad those terrible middle ages have gone by—but do you think it is not murder to-day to crowd people into such close, filthy, unventilated, waterless, undrained quarters that the natural death rates are doubled or trebled? The tenement-house owner may be directly responsible, but no prison opens for him, no pillory of public opinion disgraces him. Sometimes I think the world will go on until this century we are living in is known as Dark or Middle Ages, and people will wonder how men could look with indifference as we do on other men's miseries. Suppose that should be?"

"You are incorrigible; so is my granddaughter, Helen Cary. Well, if I cannot hinder I may help. Let me tell you, child, that ten thousand your grandfather paid to keep his word, kept me from ruin, and thanks to it I have been a prosperous business man. I always intended to make it good. As long as your grandfather lived I was not in a position where he was willing to let me return it, as he was more prosperous than I. He left it to my conscience. During your father's life I kept putting it off;

people are given to putting off such debts and playing with conscience; also I had the item provided for in my will. You think that your grandfather erred in this tenement-house business; perhaps he did; if there's a blot on his memory there, I will take the ten thousand to wash it off. In what shall I invest ten thousand for the inhabitants of Cardiff Rents and for their neighbors Kelso Street way?"

Jean had seated herself on the piazza and her old friend had seated himself beside her. The girl joyfully clapped her hands. "I know! I know! John, come out here!" John came. Just then Aunt Prudence appeared in view; she had been calling on a friend a few doors off. "Aunt Prudence!" cried Jean, "what do we want very much? Is it not what we talked about this morning at breakfast, a Rest Home near by on the coast where we can send wornout working-girls and women to recuperate; where those who are just on the verge of a breakdown can recover strength to go on with their daily bread-winning?"

"We need that very much," said Aunt Prudence. "Are you prepared to give us that, Mr. Cary?"

"No, not I, Miss Prudence; but your brother is; he, from time long past, reaches a hand that has long been dust and offers you ten thousand dollars to do such a deed as he would have done to-day if he had lived until now."

Then they went into the parlor and called Mr. Moultrie from his room to aid in the consultation, and until late discussed a plan for a Cardiff Workers' Rest.

"There 's a twelve-room cottage, facing the sea, right near our sea-side house," said John; "the owner offers it for three thousand dollars. It is sound, plain, old-fashioned, but will do well for our purpose. That would leave seven thousand for a fund to run it on."

"We should need two women there to keep the house and do the work except the washing. The visitors could wash for themselves, and keep the rooms in order," said Aunt Prudence.

"Would n't be much left of the interest of seven thousand after two salaries were paid," said Mr. Cary.

"You could get plenty of women—say mother and daughter, or two middle-aged sisters," said Mr. Moultrie, "who would be thankful for a good home and quiet life in a healthful place, and their board, with seventy-five dollars a year. You do n't know how hard the world is put to it for a living, Mr. Cary."

"And you are willing to take advantage of its necessities?" said the old gentleman, with a sly look at Jean.

"I do not think this is taking advantage," said Mr. Moultrie. "We offer a comfortable, healthy, happy living to those who are not skilled enough or strong enough to make larger wages elsewhere, and to whom the larger wages do not offer. Consider that board and shelter take nearly all the working women's wages, and these we provide. Of course if this house is bought and the seven thousand is invested as a permanent fund, we must needs go afield for furnishing and for further funds to add to the very small sum left for current expenses."

"The day Jean and I come of age," said John, taking the hand of his sister, "we will each add a thousand to that permanent investment as a thank-offering: Jean because God has restored perfectly her sight; I because he sent from above and took me and drew me out of deep waters."

"You may put me down for a couple of hundred a year, which I shall charge my son to continue after my death," said Mr. Cary. "Get the rest where you can and will, I give that much to show that there is a Cary as well as a Cardiff Conscience."

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